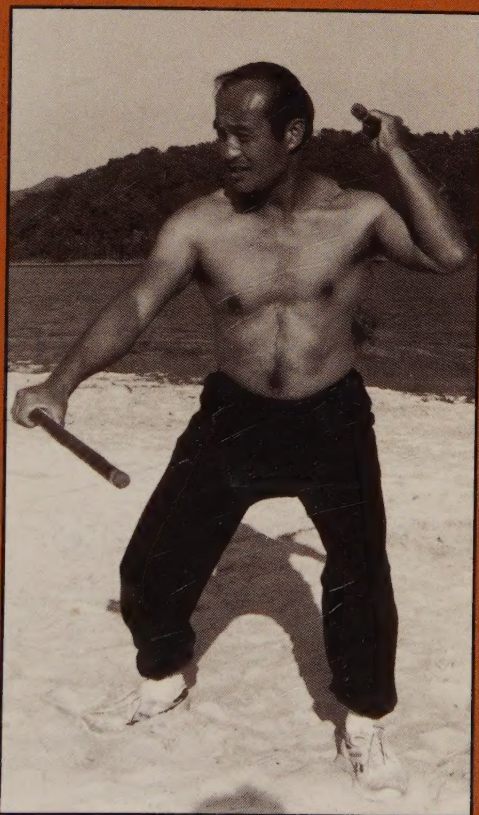
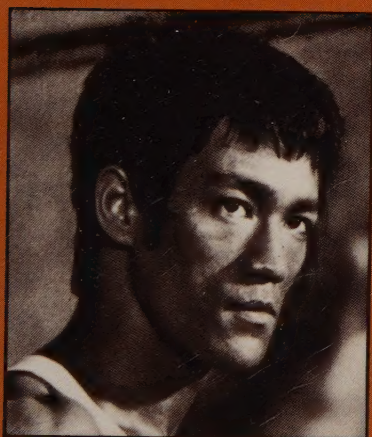


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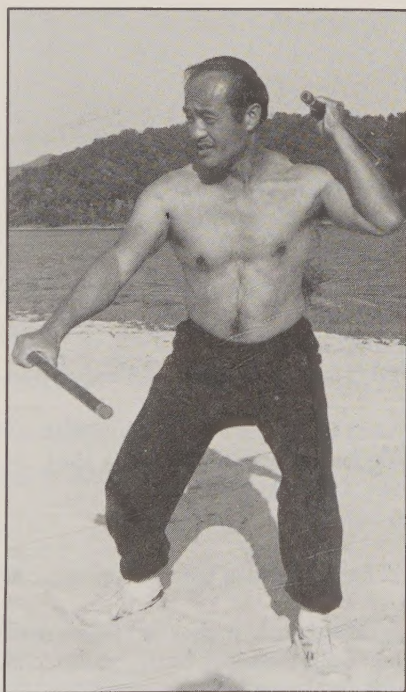
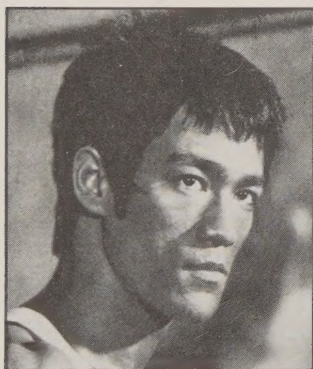
IN SEARCH OF THE ULTIMATE MARTIAL ART



The Jeet Kune Do Experience

Jerry Beasley, Ed.D.

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*In Search of the Ultimate Martial Art:
The Jeet Kune Do Experience*

by Jerry Beasley, Ed.D.

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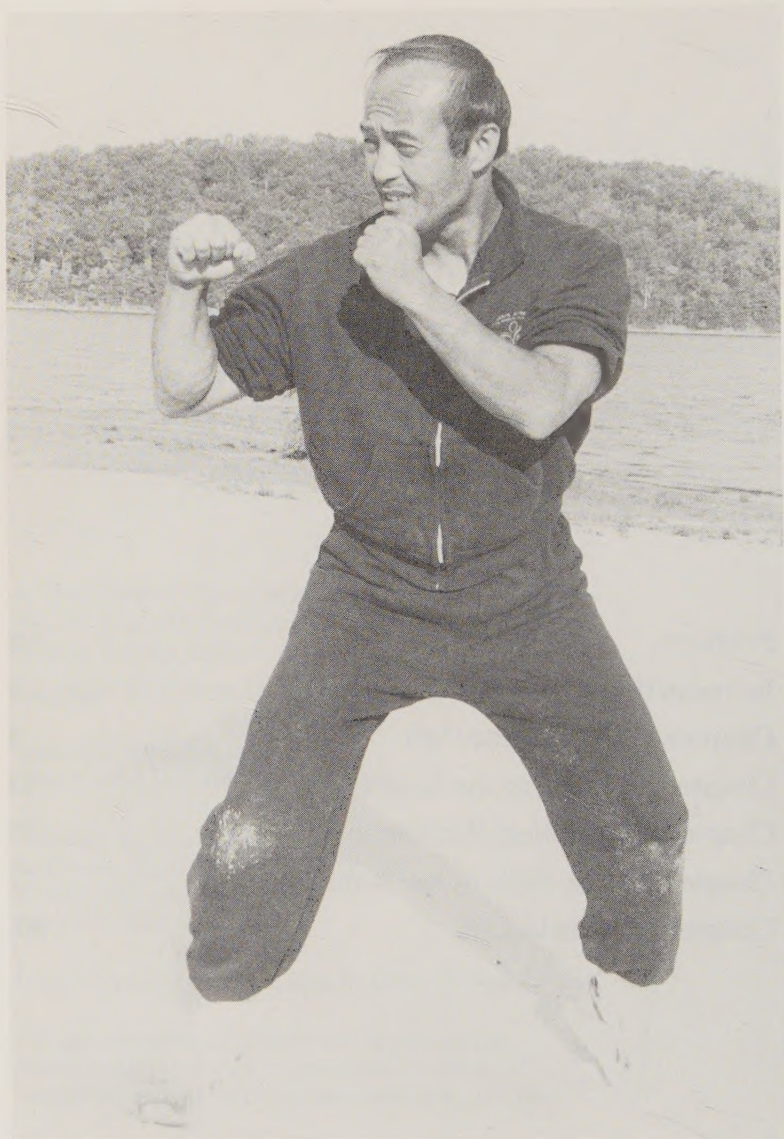


Figure 1. Dan Inosanto

This book is dedicated to Dan Inosanto on behalf of his thousands of students worldwide.

Acknowledgments

I first want to thank my wife, Gina, who was instrumental in preparing this manuscript. Thanks also to Ric Anderton who photographed most of the subjects included in this text, and to Larry Ritchie who spent many hours developing and processing the film and prints. A very special thanks is extended to the many experts who posed for photos, including Tim Tackett, Larry Hartsell, Fred Degerberg, Cliff Lenderman, Dick Harrell, Graciela Casillas, Francis Fong, members of the Degerberg Academy, and all those who helped. I am indebted to Ann and Vic Payne for allowing me to interview and photograph jeet kune do members at their camp.

I wish to extend my greatest admiration and appreciation to Joe Lewis and Dan Inosanto. These two master teachers have greatly influenced my own development in the martial arts and, in turn, made this book possible.

Finally, a word of humble thanks to the late Bruce Lee who changed the course of martial arts forever.

Preface

This book addresses the subject of training in the system of jeet kune do (JKD). In so doing, the focus is not on Bruce Lee; rather, attention is given to discovering the art that he created. Lee discovered a set of universal principles that can be found in any martial art or any combination of arts. It is the perfect unison of strategic principles with the arts that best serves to actualize the intent of the principle that defines JKD. For perhaps the first time a specific outline will be unveiled that will enable the reader to discover in more cogent terms how best to begin an individualized JKD experience.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to provide an acceptable definition of the term jeet kune do, based on the principles that compose the conceptual framework. In so doing, attention is drawn toward recognizing the views and values of individuals who studied with Bruce Lee directly, or as second generation participants.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant in several respects. First, the results of this study will contribute to the body of literature available on jeet kune do. Moreover, the study addresses a most neglected area of concern: defining the concept of JKD. There exists growing frustration on the part of many within the martial arts community who recognize JKD as an elite methodology that has not yet established recognizable parameters for the organized dissemination of information.

The popular martial arts editor, Dave Cater, in a 1988 issue of *Inside Kung-Fu*, comments on the fact that JKD is defined as the "style of no style." If there is no style, how do you know if an instructor is legitimate? By establishing a clear definition of JKD, it is intended that both the JKD group and those who are interested in studying the system may benefit. The subject of legitimacy has for many years been a major stumbling block for students who desire to study Bruce Lee's conceptual framework, also known as JKD.

METHODOLOGY

The data collected in this study is qualitative in content. In view of the fact that JKD has as yet not been satisfactorily defined, qualitative analysis seems to be the best approach. The techniques of ethnography were employed to collect what could easily be viewed as rather "slippery" and "hard to get at" information accurately describing the practice of JKD.

Regarding the techniques of this analysis, I have chosen to employ multiple methods in the study of the same topic. Since each data collection method is admittedly limited and imperfect, it is hoped that the combination of various methods may well provide the researcher with a more complete understanding of the subject of jeet kune do.

To this end, the techniques of participant observation, interviewing, personal experience, the use of informants, and content analysis were employed. The cognitive style of composition presented may be best defined by what Abraham Kaplan, in his book, *The Conduct of Inquiry*, has termed the "literary style," i.e., a plot is unfolded, a behavior sequence

is disclosed to have certain significance in terms of the specific purposes and perspectives of the participants, rather than in terms of the abstract and general categories of the scientist's own explanatory scheme.

I include this brief section on methodology to assure the reader that, while I feel a strong sense of appreciation for the JKD members who have worked with and taught me, I have attempted to provide an objective analysis of the phenomena under investigation.

Introduction

Jeet kune do is “the way of the intercepting fist.” In the twenty years or so that it has existed, JKD has become perhaps the most prestigious martial art currently practiced. Admired, if not idolized, by millions of Chinese and thousands of martial artists worldwide, Bruce Lee has been called the greatest martial artist the world has ever known. And while most of his followers recognize him as a movie star whose kung-fu was unstoppable, increasing numbers are privy to the fact that in reality he was, indeed, an exceptional martial artist.

When he died in 1973, the cause was officially labeled death by misadventure, and jeet kune do was thought to have perished. Only a few of his most trusted students were knowledgeable enough in the system to continue its practice.

Lee had created not simply an art but a system—a system that was constantly evolving. To ensure the advancement of his system, Lee selected Dan Inosanto as its spokesperson. Like Lee, Inosanto was a researcher. The analytical characteristic shared by both Lee and Inosanto became critical to the continuance of the system. JKD is at best a way of experimenting, and, for each individual who engages the principles of the system in its highest form, JKD becomes an experience.

It is important that the reader understand that the meaning or definition of JKD is found in the experience. The intent of this book is to outline a plan for utilizing the method of JKD to assist you in your own JKD experience. Let us then follow Bruce Lee's advice: "Go bravely on . . . because each experience teaches us a lesson."

Chapter 1

Finding the Path

I began my jeet kune do experience in the spring of 1982. A magazine publisher I was working with at the time had assigned me the task of locating a JKD school in Charlotte, North Carolina that was virtually unknown at the time. If you check any of the old JKD family charts you'll notice that a "handful of select students" are said to be under the supervision of Larry Hartsell. Hartsell, a North Carolina native, is one of the few individuals who actually trained under Bruce Lee.

I had been a devoted follower of the Bruce Lee philosophy since reading his first article in the 1971 issue of *Black Belt*. At that time, phrases like "abandoning tradition," "using what works," "liberating yourself from the classical mess," and so on seemed very appealing. Lee had gained some national recognition as early as 1964 when he performed a well-accepted demonstration of his skills at the Long Beach, California, Internationals. But it was not until after his death that his movie roles won acceptance and he, in turn, became a universally recognized master of kung-fu fighting.

The practice of martial arts in the United States experienced a considerable current of change between 1966 and 1972. Perhaps more than any other individual, Lee

personified the new rebel of the arts. A man who created his own system, established his own identity, and recruited his own followers, Lee was a leader in every sense of the word. Individuals who knew him say that he practiced to the point of obsession. And as we shall see, his personal obsession with creativity paved the road of his own destiny.

THE BEGINNINGS

The art of karate was introduced to the United States by former World War II servicemen who had trained in the arts while stationed in the Orient. Robert Trias is said to have been the first American to open a school in the United States in 1946. It was almost a decade later, however, that karate was taught on a commercial basis by Edmund Parker in southern California. Parker, by the way, is credited with “discovering” Bruce Lee and creating an interest in employing Lee as an actor.

During the first decade of development in America the martial arts—most notably karate, taekwon do, and, to a lesser extent, judo—were practiced with as much attention as possible to recreating the Oriental social system. Much emphasis was placed on using the proper language (Japanese or Korean, depending on the art being taught), wearing the proper uniform, and obeying the proper etiquette dictated by the chain of command.

As a graduate student completing requirements for a master’s degree in sociology, my thesis dealt with examining the ramifications and requirements for meeting the needs of the stereotypical role of the karate instructor. The emphasis on recreating the Oriental social system carried with it an implied need for looking as authentic as possible in order to be identified with the role. Needless to say, non-Orientals experienced considerable role stress in attempting to recreate a physical likeness that is not easily portrayed. Americans were already beginning to identify problems with introducing an Oriental art with thousands of years of traditions and values and recreating that system without any change.

The subject of change has long been a topic of debate in the martial arts. East Asia (China, Japan, Korea) includes

only 9 percent of the earth's land. Close to one-half of this land is desert, mountainous, or otherwise uninhabitable. In spite of these conditions, 26 percent of the world's population is organized into this rather small land mass. Change of any kind involves such large numbers of people that even the thought of it is generally rejected.

In addition to the fact that change is discouraged, the authority system in East Asia has typically rested with the oldest family man. The elder would then pass his authority on to the oldest son. Ability is assumed to be equated with age, and there seems to be little resistance to this policy.

In America, the land is plentiful. Historically, people who wanted change settled in this country. Of equal significance is the fact that age seems to be of little importance in determining success in the United States. Countless millionaires have reached that status in their teens and twenties. Even elected officials are representative of all ages, races, political ideologies, and religious beliefs. In America, change is constant.

Bruce Lee was born an American citizen. To what extent his American lifestyle influenced his eventual abandonment of traditional Chinese ways in favor of change is a matter of speculation. The fact remains that he chose to institute a new system of performing martial arts and in so doing set the stage for others to follow.

The role stress experienced by early American instructors, non-Orientals seeking acceptance in an Oriental art form, did not improve until competitive karate events became successful. Individuals such as Mike Stone, Chuck Norris, and Joe Lewis gained notoriety as sport karate heroes and presented the public with the first opportunities to view American role models for karate instruction. While Stone, Norris, and Lewis were able to gain respect as sports heroes, they were still considered unequal in terms of prestige and traditional authority to Oriental instructors.

In a doctoral dissertation completed in the fall of 1979, I categorized the period between 1956 and 1966 as the traditional era—a time during which every effort was made to ensure the Oriental dominance of martial arts in this country. By 1967, tournaments had become quite popular, and it was through the tournament setting that the first

American legends and new role models were established. Norris was perhaps the first American to mix Korean kicking techniques with Japanese hand skills and to use the new combinations successfully in competition.

Prior to Norris' success most practitioners were told by their Oriental masters that mixing systems was a forbidden practice. Using his new formula, Norris could out-kick the Japanese stylists and out-punch the Korean stylists. In spite of the current social order, he bucked tradition and won. Lewis was soon to follow the rebel cause.

Lewis met Bruce Lee at a karate tournament in 1967. Lewis, a 220-pound, muscular athlete, believed in rugged workouts and painful competition. The power of his side kick became legendary; few competitors could stop it and most wouldn't try. Lee also was an advocate of hard work and realistic contact sparring sessions. During the years 1968 and 1969, Lee and Lewis met often for training sessions. It was Lee who suggested that Lewis try boxing and it was Lee who first introduced Lewis to the strategy of angular attack.

In January 1970 Lewis introduced the sport of full-contact karate (kickboxing). Lee had encouraged him to investigate some realistic forms of combat and Lewis, the only Bruce Lee student to prove Lee's original theories in international competition, wasted no time in introducing the world to the full-contact art. Ten opponents, representing the greatest karate fighters of the day, attempted to beat Lewis and ten opponents were knocked out before the end of the second round. Before Lewis, most martial arts instructors believed in noncontact training—"the techniques were too deadly to actually make contact with." Or so they thought. Realistic combat training emphasized by Lee and tested by Lewis proved to be one of the most important events in the development of American martial arts.

While Lewis was knocking out fighters in the ring, Lee was busy developing the system of training that he had named jeet kune do—the way of the stopping fist. Since both Norris and Lewis were part-time students of Lee (keep in mind that Norris and Lewis were both national champions before they worked with Lee), Lee could boast of the fact that even the greatest champions recognized his genius. And, in fact, it was true.

It was indeed important to Bruce Lee that he be recognized as a master. Although he was barely thirty at the time, an age considered youthful by most legitimate masters, Lee was adamant about his title. As a student of the art of wing chun, he became cognizant of the fact that it would take many years of political activity to achieve status in the traditional wing chun hierarchy. The fact that he possessed highly advanced skills, perhaps at a level far greater than most of his wing chun peers, yet he must wait years for recognition, must have seemed quite depressing. Moreover, he felt more comfortable with altering and supplementing his traditional art with boxing, other forms of kung-fu, and any other art that fit his purpose, rather than continuing to, as he would put it, "blindly follow" the dictates of a leader. We can see why the creation of a new art seemed imminent.

While Lee would never become the grandmaster of wing chun, he could become the grandmaster of an art of his own creation. According to Dan Inosanto, the heir to the Bruce Lee art, Lee felt that the art of hitting while stopping a strike was the most efficient form of defense. Thus, the name *jeet kune do* was coined to describe this process. Moreover, JKD has been used as a synonym for the art of "problem solving."

Lee and his personal art of JKD have served a dual purpose. Because Lee was of Oriental descent, he automatically commanded the attention of American martial arts practitioners. Americans who acted against traditional Oriental control had been more often than not blacklisted by others in the martial arts community. However, when Bruce Lee spoke out against tradition, he was joined by many who agreed that efficiency in combat should indeed be considered more important than the "blind following of tradition." By becoming master of his own art, Lee set a precedent that others would follow. Secondly, his strategy for emphasizing efficiency in combat could not be ignored by even the most dedicated traditionalists. The effectiveness of Bruce Lee's ideology was proven in competition by Joe Lewis in both non-contact karate tournaments and in full-contact kickboxing. Yet, there was still a missing link.

Taekwon do master Jhoon Rhee, in Washington, D.C., was a long-time friend of Bruce Lee. Rhee respected Lee's skill

and was not appalled by his rebel attitude. In the spring of 1973, Rhee introduced the now famous "Safe T" equipment that allowed karate competitors to make light contact during tournament fighting. The semi-contact tournaments served to introduce martial artists to contact in training. By 1974, Mike Anderson had introduced the World Full-Contact Karate Championship which utilized the Jhoon Rhee gear in full-contact competition.

The American team, composed of Joe Lewis, heavyweight; Jeff Smith, light heavyweight; Bill Wallace, middleweight; and Howard Jackson, lightweight, was afforded the opportunity to work with contact-oriented sparring techniques and had altered its technique to accommodate these new training methods. By the end of the competition which pitted top fighters from Asia, Europe, and North America against each other, Lewis, Wallace, and Smith had each earned world titles, thus proving the validity of contact training.

The ideology of realistic contact practice introduced by Lee for self-defense purposes had also been made popular by Lewis in competition. The technological advance introduced by Rhee had made it possible for the greater martial arts community to experience the merits of the contact approach. Had Bruce Lee not died in 1973, he no doubt would have further influenced the development of martial arts in this country. Even in death his philosophy and concepts continue to be highly influential.

Lee's death and subsequent absence from the martial arts, the cancellation of the popular "Kung Fu" television series, and the emergence of "fast buck" karate and kung-fu instructors who diminished the status of the martial arts teacher, served in part to depreciate the interest in martial arts in this country. By 1974, the massive martial arts boom of 1972 and 1973 had become a thing of the past. Nevertheless, public interest in Bruce Lee and his system of JKD continued.

Magazine articles about Lee published during the mid-1970s generally agreed that Bruce Lee was adamant that a chain of Bruce Lee or JKD schools should not appear. In spite of major media attention directed toward Lee and JKD after his death and the resultant opportunities for exploitation, the few existing JKD students chose to follow the dictates of their master. No new JKD schools were to be opened. In fact, it is safe to say that JKD as an art went underground.

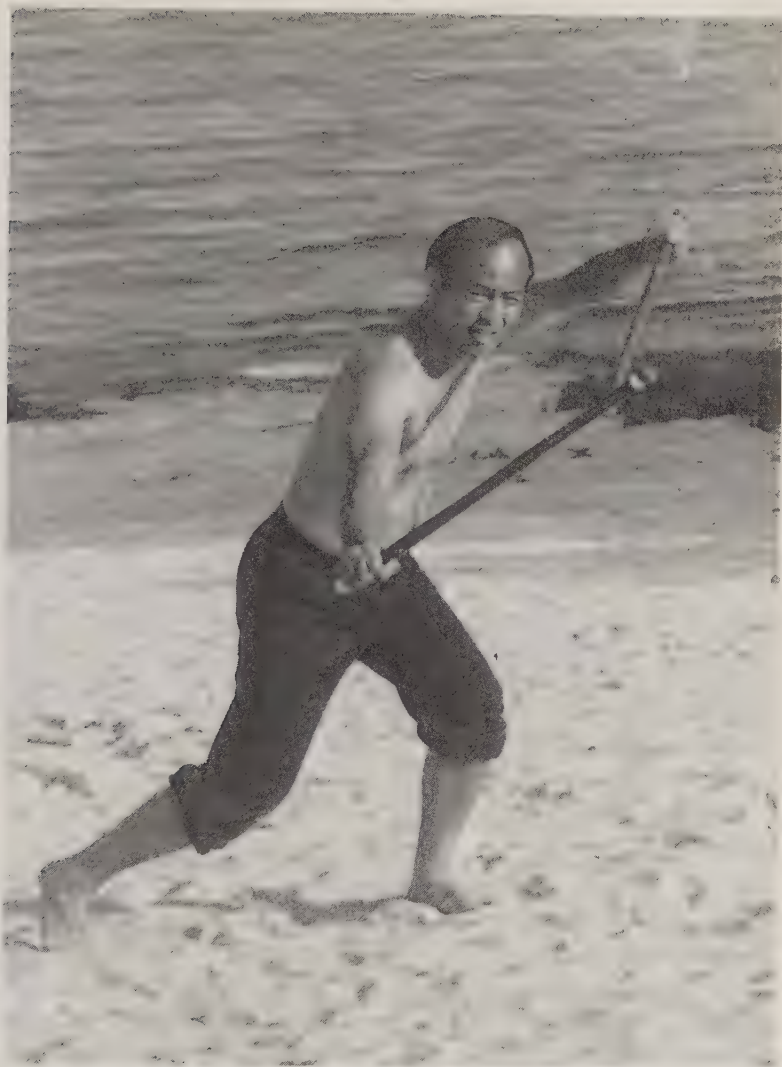


Figure 2. Dan Inosanto

Lee had left his protégé, Dan Inosanto, in charge of the JKD system. In the minds of many, this was one of Lee's wisest decisions. Inosanto was a humble, yet very gifted and loyal student. While at the time he did not possess either Lee's charisma or skill, he did give evidence of a trait that would eventually enable him not only to continue the practice of JKD, but to develop it to levels that perhaps even Lee could not have imagined.



Figure 3. Dan Inosanto exchanges ideas with the author.

Dan Inosanto is a researcher. He possesses the ability to objectively examine, analyze, and articulate methods of the martial arts. His conceptual framework is so highly evolved that he can recognize and utilize the principles of an art in less time than most others would take to learn the basic skills. These qualities are not apparent in most masters. Indeed, few would immediately recognize the importance of such an analytical ability. To his credit, Bruce Lee recognized the seeds of this ability in his student and proceeded to assist the young Inosanto in actualizing his potential.

Today, Dan Inosanto is a highly evolved martial arts genius. His humility and knowledge as a teacher is legendary, and his skills are incredible. A world-renowned lecturer, requests for his seminars must be booked a year in advance. He, more than any other, has promoted the validity of the Filipino martial arts and has successfully paved the way for thousands

to enjoy and benefit from their practice. Furthermore, Inosanto has become a major force in the positive development of martial arts worldwide.

Inosanto's name is seldom, if ever, mentioned in a negative context. He has gained the respect of others in a unique way. He has earned his position through hard work, kindness, and humility. If martial artists are attracted to the study of JKD because of Bruce Lee, they are maintained through the skill of Dan Inosanto.

Chapter 2

Going to the Source

DAN INOSANTO

Before meeting Dan, I, like many others, had a preconceived view of what a martial arts master should be. Other than the fact that he possesses untold levels of skill, he acts anything but like a traditional master. He always seems willing to first listen to your opinion, without feeling the need to share his own. Try as one might, it is virtually impossible to get him to offer a negative opinion of another martial art or martial arts instructor. As Fred Degerberg, a Chicago-based martial arts master, often says, "He's simply Dan."

My first seminar in the spring of 1983 was certainly enlightening. Like so many others, I had often watched Bruce Lee perform on the screen, read about his comments and skills, and formulated the mistaken view that JKD was simply an eclectic system, a mixing of the best from each style. Yet, in this first seminar, I could see that JKD had little to do with which style was to be used in the mix. I remember writing in my notes in 1983, "The mixture, if you will, seems dependent on the intended result."

Between 1983 through 1987, I completed a dozen or so JKD concepts seminars. In each case I took extended notes.



Figure 4. Dan Inosanto “defangs the serpent.”



Figure 5. Humble yet powerful, that's Dan.



Figure 6. "I like to train under different people. They all give you something that helps you grow."



Figure 7. Dan in Washington seminar with Cliff Lenderman.



Figure 8. "You must understand the threshold of pain."



Figure 9. "When the weapon is stopped, regain control."

Just as important, I would discuss for several hours my findings with my training partners who traveled with me. I was also very fortunate in the fact that Dan Inosanto, Larry Hartsell, Dick Harrell, Cliff Lenderman, Fred Degerberg, and other JKD instructors were willing to spend much of their spare time talking to me about the meaning of JKD.

So, in the summer of 1987, at the annual Great Smoky Mountain JKD/Kali/Thai/Silat camp hosted by Ann and Vic Payne at their North Carolina estate, I approached Dan with the idea of writing this book. His response was positive. After recording the interviews contained herein, I decided that the best way to assist the reader in learning about JKD was to provide the actual interviews along with some final suggestions.

Present-day JKD exists because of the efforts of Dan Inosanto. He is, without a doubt, the guiding force in JKD. With a tape recorder in hand, I began to ask Dan a series of questions. Here, he shares with us his answers.

Jerry Beasley: Dan, after following your teachings for the past several years, I have formulated some opinions on JKD. I think a lot of people are still confused about the meaning of JKD. I would like to try to clear up some misunderstandings and would like for people to know what it's like to attend a JKD seminar. But let's begin by talking about Bruce and how you began to work with him.

Dan Inosanto: I started working with Bruce Lee in 1964. I met him through Ed Parker at the first international karate championships. After the internationals, I played around with him for about two months before he went back to—it was either Oakland or Seattle at that time—and I was his dummy for different demonstrations at a theater in Los Angeles and also in San Francisco. That was my introduction to Bruce. He flew me up to San Francisco to do some more demonstrations, and while I was demonstrating, or being the fall guy who takes the punches and the throws, he started training me and I started to like it. At that time I was under Ed Parker—who I enjoyed being under. And so I started to correspond with Bruce and every chance I'd get, I'd fly up to Oakland to train under him, because he had moved to Oakland. So my training with Bruce went all the way from 1964 to the latter part of 1970, when he left the hometown to do movies.

In 1967, he made me an instructor to teach his Chinatown school in Los Angeles. When he went to Hong Kong, my training wasn't as steady because he was making pictures. But I went back again for a period of, I believe it was six weeks—he was doing a picture at the same time—to update my training with him.

JB: When did he first coin the term *jeet kune do*?

DI: *Jeet kune do* was probably coined in 1967—I'd have to read my own book, but I believe if you check the book it's 1967. He was just driving by in a car and said that he believed to stop the attack and intercept was high combat, so he said *jeet kune do*—the way of intercepting people. *Jeet kune* is also a Chinese form, but I don't think he took the name from that form. He learned it from another Chinese guy where he learned another style of kicking.

JB: What type of workouts and such did Bruce get involved in?

DI: Of course, a lot of tool development, attribute training, he did a lot of sparring, obviously—light sparring—a lot of full-contact, which was like three-quarters power to the body—and with the legs, a little bit lighter maybe. We did a lot of timing practice, a lot of football shield. We didn't have Thai bags, but he had seen them in Thailand. So he used football arm shields, but we had to use two because the kick was harder. We did heavybag work, we did speedbag work, we did, obviously, focus glove work . . . and that was the extent of the training. He used to tell me that if you're working on a combination, you should figure out at least two or three different ways to work on it so you won't be bored. We skipped rope. This training was almost like for a wrestler or a boxer.

JB: Now, he started originally in wing chun . . .

DI: His first method was really tai-chi chuan, which he learned from his father. He studied wing chun, and he trained under three people at that time: Yip Man (who was actually the head instructor), Bill Cheung, and Wong Sheung Meong. And then he studied under a man named Hsou, who taught him a northern system that employed many types of kicks—low kicks, middle range kicks, sort of like wushu-type hooking kicks and things of that nature. He learned a lot of that.

JB: What years are we talking about here?

DI: We're talking about before he left for the United States—the 1950s probably. I believe he came to the United States in about 1959. Before that he'd really trained as a wing chun practitioner, and he traded with a lot of people like the praying mantis. I think—and this is my own speculation—that he realized he could never get it from the top guy. So what he'd do is go to a guy fairly high up in that system and say, "Hey, would you like to learn wing chun? How about you teaching me southern praying mantis, northern praying mantis or choi ley fut, and we'll exchange . . ." That's how he picked up his ideas to stay eclectic. He also trained in Western boxing and was a high school champion. I believe at that time it was twelve high schools, and he was the champion of that year. He beat the guy who was runner-up champion for three years and he got into Western boxing and incorporated wing chun into his Western boxing.

JB: This isn't typical of a Chinese practitioner.

DI: No. I would say, definitely not. Bruce became good because he was Western as well as Eastern in his approach. And that's what I think he tried to relay to me. You have to have an open mind. Everything out of the West is not good—either in medicine or in other things. And everything from the East is not always the best. So it's a blend of what he thought was the best.

JB: Once he came to Seattle, he was teaching primarily as a hobby?

DI: Yes, hobby. And then later on for income. I don't think he ever made it, though. He never liked the Chinatown school. The dues would go to him, but a lot of people never paid dues. He took little odds-and-ends jobs. He had a little income—but it was never on a big scale. When we were training, I remember he frowned on us taking money for teaching the art at that time period and without his permission.

JB: We hear from time to time that Bruce was a fighter—and that seems to be, continually, a topic. How many fights did he have? Did he fight?

DI: Well, you see, there are fights and confrontations. A fight is really hard. A match in the ring is not a fight. It is not a fight. To this day, you can get an outstanding boxer and he might lose out in the street. But get in the ring and

it's within his confines. So with fights—he's had plenty in the streets of Hong Kong. As he told me, he was, in his own words, a punk who traveled around in a fight. That's one reason he was sent over to America—because he was always in a fight. We're talking streetfights, see. I've seen him in what I don't even call fights. I've seen guys who wanted to punch his nose out, break his bones, or whatever. But they could never do it, so it turned into a lesson. They found out that he could just, literally, play. I think Louis Delgado said it in the best way. He said Bruce was probably the most baffling fighter that he'd ever met. I think that probably pays Bruce the highest compliment on that matter because he could mostly play. Yet Louis—at that time I still considered him a point fighter—was probably one of the better point fighters in the United States. From my own research I've found out that guys who are really good—you don't always hear about them in the magazines. You never hear about them in *Black Belt*, *Inside Karate*, or any type of martial arts publication. And there are good ones who don't care to have the notoriety, and that's their privilege. So I know that there are two worlds. I know that there's a world where a martial artist gets notoriety and there's a world of remaining unknown. For an example, I'll use myself. Most people think that I'm supposed to be the big expert stick fighter, but I'll just say right now that I've been beaten by some pretty good ones. I have a little more notoriety, but I'm definitely no big master. I know that. Bruce knew all this because he'd been in combat. He knew what it was all about. He's taken some bruises himself, so he knew what kali's all about. He changed in personality, I think, a lot, too.

JB: Going back in time to the late 1960s when they first came out with the article in *Black Belt*, there seemed to be a negative attitude toward Bruce Lee . . .

DI: Yes, there was, because Bruce was trying to share something with the people, and you can't break that ground with people when they're taught a certain way and they don't go against tradition. Our sports world is full of that. Hank Messetti, the guy who was criticized for doing jump shots and shooting one-handed, was criticized because they said he had to be balanced. The first people to start using fiberglass poles were laughed at because aluminum poles were used

in pole vaulting. Then when they started to go up to sixteen feet and seventeen feet and eighteen feet, no one laughed. Perry O'Brien ran into the same thing Bruce ran into. He changed the method of shot putting and when he first started with the method, the traditionalists laughed. But no one laughed when his ball went over sixty feet, because at that time sixty feet was a heck of a good throw. To this day, we still sort of use the O'Brien method. Bruce wasn't well liked because what he was saying to people the traditionalists didn't want. One thing that tournament karate brought into the world, I thought, was that karate guys could no longer put these guys in these stances and march them up and down the floor. They had to show something because the school was on the line for its reputation, and they had to do well in tournaments. The tournaments, in my opinion, did a lot of good because they stopped the traditionalists from going up and down and sitting and different stances and punching like that—which is part of the training. Now Bruce said that's good, but sometimes the way you punch was not the way you start punching. He made a prediction I thought was pretty good. He said, "You watch, Dan. These people right now in point style—they'll go into full-contact karate and they will realize they will not be able to punch like they do in the katas and in their one- and two-step sparring. They will go to a boxing trainer to get their hands right." And at that time I thought, no, it's not possible. But now I see that all the better fighters use the boxing training which Bruce predicted they would do, and they put their hands up. To this day people say, full-contact karate, yeah, we use the jab and the hook and the cross, which really come from boxing, not from karate. But at that time, they would have laughed. I can remember a time when people said (about us) that's not kung-fu. They have boxing gloves on. And look, there's no horse stance. They're moving around like boxers. That's stupid—they're not even punching correctly. Because people were used to seeing what, for that time period, was the standard. And I think that's why Bruce ran into a lot of jealousy. Anybody who gets up there ahead is bound to be envied. Take Joe Lewis for example. Joe Lewis was good. There's no doubt about it. In my opinion, I would rank him as one of the greatest full-contact fighters in the history of

America. A lot of people are very jealous—one, he was good looking; two, he had a good build; and three, he was a good fighter. So everyone seemed so down, right? Because a lot of people don't like a person to get ahead and they don't want a person to get too popular. So, in that respect, it was the same with Bruce. He was unpopular.

JB: There's also a feeling that Bruce wanted recognition as a master.

DI: I don't know if that's quite true, because for one thing—and I know he made pictures—he wanted to get his ideas across. I don't think he ever really wanted to be known as a master. In fact, Bruce never really believed in the word master. He considered a master as such when they closed the casket. He said that's when one possibly could be called a master. I don't think he ever wanted it because he realized that. He told me that he went to what he thought were the experts in the field and they weren't really the experts. He used to tell me all the time if you go to a barber, he should be able to cut hair. If you go to a beautician, he or she should be able to fix you up. You go to any type of lawyer and he should know his law. See, he found out in the martial arts that sometimes if you went to find a master like he did, you may discover that the person sought out really isn't schooled enough to be teaching. He could teach you a discipline, maybe, but he really couldn't teach you a fighting art. There really is a difference. Bruce used to say, there's a difference, Dan, between sparring, like we do all the time, and going into the ring for a bout, which we do maybe once a month. And there's a difference if we were just going to kick ass on each other. That would be completely different. It's true. There are a lot of people who haven't had one martial arts lesson and you know they can fight. Their side kick might look atrocious, their spinning kick might look terrible, they might fall flat on their feet, the punches or whatever might look bad, but they can fight.

JB: Bruce was in college in the mid-1960s. In the late 1960s when Bruce really started coming out, was he influenced by the attitudes of the time—of going against the traditions like so many Americans were standing up and doing? It seems that the climate was right.

DI: He was definitely looking for a better way. I used to

argue with him. I'd say they've been doing it this way for hundreds of years. Who are you to say that you are right and they're wrong? He says, "That's it, Dan. They've been doing it thousands of years that way." Referring to modes of transportation, you mean to tell me, he says, if you always traveled by horse and buggy, you would not change? And I thought about it. It's true, because with transportation, if we always had a propeller plane and somebody came along and said we were going to fly without a propeller, you might not believe it. This actually happened to me. A kid I was going to school with, his father was into jets. One kid said to him, "Come on, you mean to tell me that your dad says we're going to fly planes without propellers?" He was ridiculed—then, of course, we had the jet. The same kid says, "Listen, you realize how fast sound is? You're telling me that we're going to have a plane that will fly faster than sound?" People didn't believe it. And in astronomy—we once thought the world was flat. See, we'd look kind of stupid now, wouldn't we? Those people—the experts—were the masters of their material. Nobody would ever buck. As much as you love your mother and father, you realize that they make a lot of mistakes. With martial arts, it's the same way.

JB: Getting back to the social climate of the time, do you think it had an influence on him or was it just a natural progression?

DI: For him it was a natural progression. He was trying to figure out what was workable. Bruce, like I said before, was always interested in what worked. He was very pragmatic. He based his system on directness, simplicity—but it's very hard to explain. And the big thing he used to do for me would be to ask me, "What is simple, direct, and nonclassical?" And I'd say you have to have something classical, even to teach traditional math. He said, "Dan, let me show you what it's all about." He had a wallet and he just threw it at me. And I caught it. It almost hit my face. He said, "What did you do?" I said I caught it. He said, "You reacted. You were simple and direct. Now you're going to have a class to teach that. How would you teach it?" And then I thought about it. Would you catch it with two hands going horizontally? Would you catch it with two hands going diagonally? These are schools of catching. Some schools would make it into

a ceremony. They would have uniforms for catching a wallet, go into different rituals, make a system. But it's simple, direct, and nonclassical. There's no schooling. It's very natural.

JB: Bruce incorporated many schools of thought in his work.

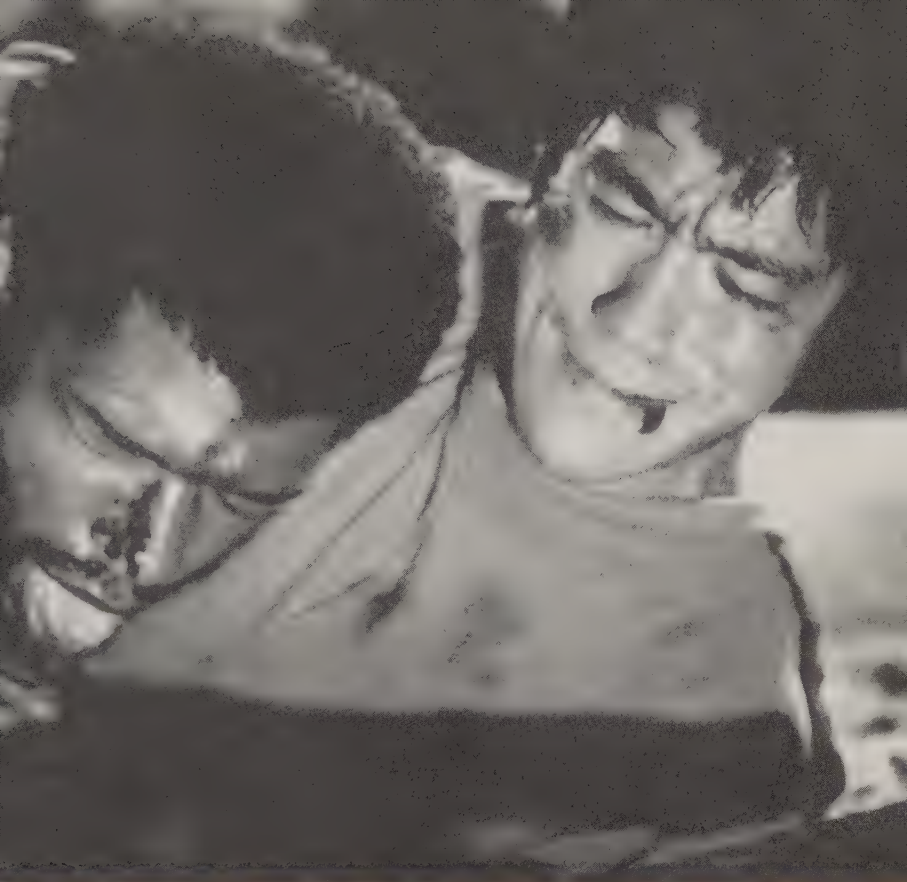
DI: He was well read and he studied many different types of philosophy.

JB: When did the first jeet kune do school come about—on a small scale, of course?

DI: JKD was partly started in 1965 in Los Angeles. Bruce moved to Los Angeles in, I think, December 1965. He was happily living in L.A. after living in Oakland. In fact, he was on retainer at this time. But in '65, JKD really wasn't conceived yet. He did have a small group. In '66 it wasn't really conceived, but I could see what he was working toward. I learned forms when I was under him, which was a shock to a lot of people. And then all of a sudden he was saying he didn't like forms and he wanted to work on this and that, and by '67 he'd coined the term. So it became known as *jeet kune do*—the way of intercepting fists. Now, my belief is—and this is the belief of James DeMile—that he realized he could never be the top man in the wing chun system. So in order to be as good as the wing chun system, to cope with the wing chun system, he chose to go out of the system so he could be one of the top people who ever came from that system. It is true that he used wing chun. There's no doubt. He used the concept of wing chun. When he taught me, he said, "I'm not teaching you the system of wing chun, which is a good system." He did start to teach me the concept, the essence, of that particular system.

JB: Of course, the screen version of Bruce Lee demonstrated many arts, from wing chun to grappling and kickboxing. He didn't seem to favor a single style, did he?

DI: No, because he could change in midstream. One minute he could look like any kicking system and at middle range, he could explode like a savage streetfighter or a Western boxer. And when he got in tight it looked like wing chun. And then when he'd go to the ground, it looked sort of like jujutsu. He was a good grappler also. Despite his lighter weight, he was very quick. I think he probably received training from various Chinese people and also from Gene LeBell. They



Above: In his last movie, *Game of Death*, Bruce Lee ends a fight with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. (Photo courtesy of Warner Brothers.)

Overleaf: Bruce Lee and Bob Wall from the movie *Enter the Dragon*. (Photo courtesy of Warner Brothers.)





buddied around a lot, probably exchanging ideas. And he probably learned a lot of jujutsu from maybe Wally Jay. So you don't really know who influenced Bruce Lee. Bruce was influenced by a lot of people. He's a collection of many different thoughts.

See, Bruce had attributes. You could learn fifty songs and never have a good voice, although there are some songs that your voice sounds better with. That's the way methods and disciplines work. They can accentuate the particular attributes that you have. To me, that's what jeet kune do is. It's absorbing what is useful for you. And there's the argument that anybody can do it. But you have to have a common thread, and the common thread would probably be the understanding of range. What are the tools that can be employed at this particular range in fighting? Take karate, which is a very good art. It is a good system for showing reflex. But see, when the fight closes in, there's always a referee to separate them so they can go to outside range again. Fighting isn't like that. Once you crash, it usually stays there. A lot of times, it's rolling around on the floor, not even looking very good. You can't even say whether it's *choi ley fut* or *wing chun*—or whatever the method might be. So it's really hard to say. Everyone has to be himself.

JB: Bruce Lee died in 1973. What happened to the JKD group?

DI: The JKD group, at that time, did not want to push the art. They weren't really interested. Take Daniel Lee. He's not really interested in pushing JKD, so he teaches *tai chi*. In 1973, I went more into *kali*. I'm more into *muay thai* and I'm more into *pentjak-silat*. I like *silat*—even though there are a lot of things in it that I can't do. I like *tai chi*. I practice *tai chi*. Everyone likes a little bit of something. I like a lot of jujutsu. I like Wally Jay. I like to train under different people. They all give you something that helps you to grow. It's raising the level of consciousness in the martial arts world. That's my goal. It is never like that—where one group is superior to another. We are talking about a superior individual. In my opinion, Joe Lewis would have been good whether he was a *shotokan* man, whether in *shorin-ryu*, or in *kenpo karate*—or in a Korean system. He would have been good because he himself is good. He trained hard. That would be my opinion.

JB: Dan, in all of your seminars I have been trained in what I refer to as cultural arts. We have been schooled in Chinese, Filipino, and Thai arts, for example. Is this typical of all JKD training?

DI: It's collective, and then you find out what's good for you. Like at camp, one student may like 15 percent of muay thai, he might like 100 percent of it, he might like 80 percent. Of the wing chun, he might like 20 percent of it, where another guy might like 50 percent of it. The percentages will differ. You cannot fix the human mind. When you teach U.S. history—we had it in the fifth grade, in the tenth grade, and again in the twelfth grade. In college, you may have it when you're a sophomore and then again when you're a senior. But every time you take it, you learn something different. I guess the point is that U.S. history is taught differently. You may have five teachers in the school, and they will all teach it differently even though they all have the same material. They may have the same knowledge, but the way they present it and the way they give it to the students is different. Their personality has to be in it.

JB: In your opinion, could a karate practitioner exemplify JKD?

DI: If he goes out of the boundaries of karate and realizes the limitations and the advantages of that particular structure. You should experience a little bit of grappling. The side kick and round kick may keep you out of the grappling range. But, what happens when you get there? What happens when you get into a cold climate and you don't have time to warm up? Of what use is the side kick and the spin kick?

JB: As you know, I teach as well as have a national martial arts organization. As I talk to karate people from across the country, I get the impression that they believe JKD to be simply an eclectic mixture of arts like shotokan, goju, taekwon do, and so on.

DI: I'll tell you where the mix is—or the prevalent thought. We've always been under the strong influence of boxing. We've been strongly influenced by wing chun. And we have taken different attitudes from different systems. Therefore we are not trying to promote a system. Like I said before, I like muay thai. So I impose it on my students. I like Burmese boxing and other systems. The point is that they are collective in nature and they don't rally around the flag of one particular

discipline. Look at the quote, “Using no way as the way”—not the shotokan way, not the Korean way, not the Japanese way, not the Chinese way—and using no limitation as the limit. I do not limit myself strictly within the Japanese system. I do not limit myself. If you take the sai and say this is strictly Okinawan, they will laugh in southeast Asia because in Indonesia, that is one of the tools of basic pentjak-silat. The name is different. How many people in the United States are aware of that fact? Not too many people. Therefore, it is incorrect to say it is from Okinawa. You can see it in some of the buildings that are in Indonesia. Therefore, that consciousness should be understood. If you write American history from the standpoint of Southern history and Northern history, I always knew that the Northern history was a little bit twisted. It made the South out to be the bad guys and the North as the good guys, which is not really true. But the way you tell the story—anything can be slanted. So JKD really isn’t just a lot of Chinese systems and a lot of Filipino elements. It’s a concept, just like when you talk about the best vacation spot. You can say the best vacation spot is in the mountains and I might say it’s in the beach area or in Mexico, Hawaii, or the Bahamas. Those are concepts of a form of relaxation. If we try to strictly say it’s Hawaii—and it has to be Honolulu—well, we’ve missed it because it could be outside of that. It could be in Pennsylvania or in North Carolina. It’s never one. I’ve brought in jujutsu people for my students. Some of the students don’t like it. Some of them do. But all realize that they take one or two or three or four or five things from that for education. My belief is that you can use any system so long as you identify. Whatever saves me, I’m going to use. Whenever I teach, I give credit to the system, to where I learned it. I don’t say it’s JKD.

JB: Dan, again, based on my own research into JKD, I have to say that I have experienced a strong multicultural type of perspective. Do you agree?

DI: Yes. I would say it’s multicultural. Take kali, which sort of went through a JKD thing, too, for us. We kind of put it together, using what we thought was the best. And another guy might put it together differently. And my students might be different from me, just as we all go to school and retain something different.

JB: For a person with background in any art—kali, karate, or whatever—who wants to experience JKD, what would you suggest? How could a person practicing taekwon do in Detroit get a feeling for JKD? What would be the first step?

DI: I think just going around in your area.

JB: By maintaining this multicultural perspective, not being limited to the prevalent thought on self defense systems in only one culture, the person in search of JKD should investigate other styles that are outside of his main cultural style.

DI: Some systems are so similar. There are differences, but not as much as if you were to experience wing chun, southern mantis, choi ley fut . . . That would be different. Pentjak-silat, muay thai . . . That would be different. If a guy says he wants to experience the United States and I take him to Atlanta, and then to another city in Georgia, and to another city in Georgia, and maybe one city in North Carolina, does he then know the United States? No, he really doesn't because he hasn't experienced California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona . . . To really get an understanding, you have to at least travel enough to realize what it's about. And even if you go to California, what you see may not be the "typical" California lifestyle—depending on the people you're with, the town you're in, what part of town you're in. That takes time.

JB: Exactly. Mixing different styles of karate, or mixing different styles of kung-fu does not fully engage the multicultural perspective. Do you have any problem with people using the term *JKD*—or the JKD approach?

DI: No, I don't have any problem with that. A lot of my students do. I'm not in JKD. I teach the concept. But the more I say concept, people think it's a style. Because they have visions of Bruce Lee in movies kicking high, they think that's JKD. The man was good. What he could do, I can't do. I tell students that. I can't do it—period. But Bruce Lee used to tell me if I walk out that door right now and I get beaten up, it doesn't mean that what he taught me is not valid. When you play football and lose a game, it doesn't mean that what your coach taught you—what play you used—was not valid. You just have to improve. If you lose a basketball game, it doesn't mean that the jump shots you

learned and the different plays you learned were invalid. You may have to work on timing. You may have to work on team unity. The plays are never wrong. You can take the same system of a number one NFL team in football—whoever it is that year—and give that same identical system to a last place team, say, in a high school league, and in all probability, they may not come out of the cellar. You can take a great boxing trainer and you can give him to a fighter whose attributes are not so good, and he's not going to be successful. People tend to compare systems and if they really understand systems, they won't ever say they practice in JKD or in goju. As Bruce said, if they fuss over the name *JKD*, then let the name be dropped. That's exactly what I've done over the past seven years. So if they want me to do something in JKD, I say I'll teach the concept through kali.

JB: Dan, I know that I have told you before that understanding the term *JKD* is very frustrating. There has been no attempt to define it in terms that can be easily understood. As a researcher, my job is to establish a definition. Over the years, I have come to recognize a structure to JKD. We have certain principles, including angles of attack, that can be used for any system. What I have observed is that when we understand angles of attack, we see that some arts, like kali and wing chun, specialize in immobilization, for example, while karate has virtually no trapping methods. As a result, wing chun practitioners may have a greater sense of the attack by immobilization method than karate practitioners. Wouldn't it be safe to use five ways of attack as part of the definition or as a basic guideline for understanding the meaning of JKD?

DI: Yes, you could. In trapping, hand immobilization means wrestling. You can immobilize the wrist, the finger, the shoulder for one, two, three seconds, or longer. In karate, we've never experienced that. If a 260-pound linebacker from an NFL team rushes you right now, you've got one side kick to take him out. And if you don't, he's into grappling range. He's picking you up right now. Try to visualize it. Your jab is gone, your cross is gone . . . What's left? Now he's squeezing you to death. What's available for you to use now? That's something we don't experience because there are two different things. A fight is terrible. It's smashing faces on

concrete, it's knifing . . . That's why the art is different. You don't know if your art will save you. Nobody knows. Just like with football—you don't know how well your training will pay off. After you win a couple, you'll have some idea of how you're going to stand in the league that year. But you really don't know if all the preparation is going to do it.

JB: If a person understood the multicultural perspective, if he understood this philosophy of the ways of attack, would he then be prepared to use this as a conceptual framework so that when he investigates an art—karate, muay thai, or whatever—he would then pick out the things to suit him? To, in effect, “absorb what is useful?”

DI: Yes. I think it would be safe to say that's true. And if he knew how to integrate them—for instance, you wouldn't drink coffee and tea out of the same cup. You might be able to drink them at the same time, even out of separate cups, but still, it wouldn't be a good mix. But in one given day, you might drink both. It's a feeling, an understanding of when something is useful.

JB: You want to have an understanding of the culture. And this seems to be the meat of it.

DI: You're on the right track. Again, it would be different for each individual.

JB: You're saying there's a third element and that it's a feeling.

DI: Yes, it's a feeling. You just know. It's like when you go into a record shop, how do you know you like a certain type of music because it relaxes you? You just know.

JB: So there are actually two additional variables. One is the instructor or the experience that you have and, two, your ability to absorb.

DI: Right. Your ability to absorb. For example, I ask people what they think of what I teach, and the major criticism, whether here or abroad, is that, in the beginning, it's too fast. But by the second or third seminar, they can do it. With the kali system, they read word by word. At first, they don't learn to read groups of words, like speed-reading. Therefore, they see three motions, where a good escrima or kali man will see one because he sees the path. There's the difference. They will learn to read groups of words. Once that's

understood, they can speed read. But in the beginning, they want me to go—block, draw back, hit. They don't realize it's your minor to set up your major.

I like it that way because it's actually what you're doing when you teach kali because you have a group of patterns. It's just like a phone number. You'll never run out of combinations. With a phone, you don't run out of digits. You never run out of numbers because you can change them around. So it is with technique. But some people get stuck in a groove and can't get out of it because of how they've been taught. We're always secure in something we know. Schoolteachers are like that. If I know a chapter, I will stay on that chapter just a little bit longer. But if I'm unsure or uncomfortable with a chapter, I'll cover it but not as intensely. As martial arts teachers, we all do that. There's nothing wrong with that. I gravitate to what I like because it works for me. As a football player, I like to go off tackle. I like to go in run. But there are some backs who say they like to go off tackle and off guard. The approach for each individual is different. The JKD is an animal. You make it that. I drop it because I understand it. But I carry it because the people who are my students need it. Bruce, to me, was a finger pointing to the moon. The moon is the object, but people are still looking at the finger. I'll never be as talented as Bruce.

JB: Then if you want to point people in the direction, the first step is to forget the JKD name?

DI: That's right, forget it. Forget JKD. Pursue your own goal. You can use any system as a base system.

JB: Also, understand the multicultural perspective and the concept of range or distance. Most people use three ranges: short, medium, and long.

DI: Most systems are hitting systems, striking systems—kicking and punching. Then there's a system which is half grappling and half punching. Then there's grappling when you're sort of standing up and there's grappling when you're down. Then the complete technology of combat changes once you put a dagger in a guy's hand. What was so functional for an empty hand system isn't now. A guy could have ten years of kickboxing and face this guy with a knife, and the circumstances are totally different.

JB: Now, we are establishing ground rules. We have range, angles of attack, the multicultural perspective.

DI: We also have terrain. You cannot do a step and slide all the time. It looks good within the confines of a range. Now, we might be on farm land and it may not work, or in the mud, where you can't shuffle. If you have a guy coming toward you, he doesn't care what you know, he doesn't care if you know ten styles, he doesn't care if you hold five black belts in five different systems—he just wants to tear your head off. You've got to deal with him. That is very uncomfortable for a lot of people. It's like taking a troop you've trained in the Arctic and shipping them into the tropics. Their camouflage of white is no good. The skis for transportation may not work sliding down in the muddy terrain. So the terrain is a factor. You take a group that's good in jungle warfare and put them in a wooded area, and it may be similar in ways, but it's so very different. Vietnam taught us that. We had the air support. We had the men. We had the logistics straight. But where was the enemy? We didn't know at times. In warfare, on a given day, you don't know what will happen.

To me, the martial arts should join people. It doesn't. It separates people. Styles have always separated people. My whole thing with the kali system—I want to join that kali triangle with taekwon do and other arts. We need to unite people. I hope my students take the same attitude. I'm not going against Bruce in this because I loved Bruce, although we had our differences. I'll never be as good a martial artist as he was, but I don't want to carry that banner. That's what he wanted. It's a concept. Use what's effective, what works for you. Everybody helps you grow. Another field of endeavor might help you grow.

JB: When we use the term collective, we have to go back to those principles of cultures, terrain, ways of attack, ranges, and then the two variables, the individual experience and the teacher preference.

DI: Right. With kali, there are a lot of good stick fighters, but some are just that—fighters. They can't teach it. In my opinion, you've got to have a student who wants to learn and you have to have a teacher who wants to teach. Those are the two elements. And you have to have a workable system

of progression to go from A to Z. Those three things are what you need for a martial art. But no one has all the answers—no one. If I want help, I think nothing of going to someone for it. If I wanted help in stick fighting, I would go to an expert in that field. You can have a degree in, let's say, geology, but not understand the concepts of chemistry or physics. There's nothing wrong with that. With martial artists, I don't understand why so many can't see this. In education, they seem to know it. I was a rookie schoolteacher. I knew I was a rookie. I didn't have the same experience of a teacher who's been in the field for fifteen years. So I asked them to help me. I told them I was a rookie in my first year and that I expected to make mistakes. For the martial arts, I use this same concept. I like the Thai kicking power. There are some kicks in kali like Thai boxing, but they're not as powerful. But you can't absorb it by watching it. You've got to go in and feel it, because sometimes it won't look good—like pentjak, which looks terrible sometimes. It may not look pretty, but it's efficient. And that's really what I think JKD should lead toward. Find out what's for you, and use those elements we've discussed.

JB: Using the principles we have listed would at least put a person on track so that if he wanted to use the term *JKD*, he would know what the principles are, whether or not he truly understands the meaning of JKD.

DI: Yes, I think it's safe to say that. In weaponry, you have three distances, and you have to have an understanding of long-range weapons. A guy could be very efficient in short-range weaponry, such as with knives, but his expertise may not be with a sword or a twenty-six- or thirty-inch stick. There's another category. If you have a long pole or a staff, it's different. So even in weaponry there are categories. So many people practice with empty hands and don't understand that, with weapons, the technology changes. You have to deal with the situation differently.

JB: Do you think we've begun to put some structure or definition into this unstructured concept?

DI: I'd like to think so. Like I said, I have to grow from year to year. My point is that a JKD practitioner, in the concept of JKD, has to be a student—even if he's a teacher—at all times. Anybody who's been in the teaching profession for

over five years knows he doesn't know the answers. He learns as he teaches, and maybe from his own students, he learns. I think everyone does. Even if you taught for twenty years, you still make rookie mistakes.

JB: Having heard the term *JKD* since 1971 and having been influenced by it, I've always noticed that it's so hard to get a definition, other than an example, and I've always felt it was something that it needed. If something cannot be defined, is it something?

DI: It's problem solving. No matter how well you do on the job, you learn your job by experience and problem solving. That's the whole key to *JKD*. You join, like Bruce and me, in the problem solving. For example, I know what grappling is. I've felt its pain. I know the frustration of not being able to get out. I'm not a very good grappler, but I have an understanding of it. I've experienced it. But some people won't even experience it. I change from year to year, as I realize, as I become educated, as I expand my consciousness. And my students may not think the same way as I do. I don't expect them to. People in *JKD* are very independent. They should be able to think like themselves, and they don't necessarily have to follow what I think. Everyone will interpret differently. This is the way I think Bruce left it for us to follow.

JB: Where do you see *JKD* going in the future?

DI: I hope that the term *JKD concept* is used along with a specification of style. I am a muay thai practitioner, and I use *JKD* concepts. I'm a pentjak-silat and kali practitioner, and I use *JKD* concepts.

JB: And what we've defined here—the categories, influences, and variables . . .

DI: That is the concept.

JB: And so if a person understands that and is willing to take the time to experience, to search out the instructors, then he's on the right track?

DI: Right. Always remember, there will be areas of proficiency and areas which are not so fully developed—like going to school. You might not be too good in math or spelling or reading, but that doesn't mean you don't know it. You take some of the best writers, many can't even spell or punctuate. They know how to express, but can't write it.



Figure 10. Larry Hartsell

LARRY HARTSELL

Larry Hartsell is a nice guy. He maintains, like his other JKD peers, a nonpolitical and noncompetitive attitude. Although Hartsell has not been thought of as a flashy performer or a commanding lecturer, he attracts attention through his genuine attempts to help others. Charged with heading the grappling section of JKD, Hartsell draws from various arts to present a composite view of close-range fighting. The author of two books on JKD, Hartsell continues to be one of the most visible JKD instructors.

He, like Dan Inosanto, takes much pleasure in doing things for other people. Some might attribute his congenial attitude to being a Southern gentleman. Others may say he got that way by hanging around with Dan. I think he probably started out in life by being the kind of guy everyone would like to call a friend and has simply matured favorably in that role. At any rate, Larry Hartsell is one of the most experienced JKD instructors.

He's always ready to talk about Bruce and his involvement during those early years. In his lectures he mentions Bruce's name with reverence. For Larry Hartsell and the people he works with, Bruce is still around, if not in body, then in spirit. Hartsell wanted to discuss the process of becoming a JKD practitioner. So we began the interview by talking about how he came to be involved in the arts.

Jerry Beasley: When did you get started in the martial arts?

Larry Hartsell: When I was fifteen years old. That was in judo in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 1961 I went to Los Angeles and studied shotokan. And then I met Ed Parker and Dan Inosanto, and studied with them until about 1964. I was drafted into the army at that time.

JB: You went to Vietnam?

LH: Yes.

JB: Did you use any of your martial arts training there?

LH: I sure did. I used to spar with a taekwon do group.

JB: Did you have the chance to use it in the field?

LH: Not really. I had a few personal conflicts over there.

JB: You were a student under Dan Inosanto and he introduced you to Bruce Lee?

LH: Right. I met Bruce in 1964 before I left and again when I was home on leave in 1966. We became friends.

JB: What were the circumstances under which you met him?

LH: It was through Dan. He came into Ed Parker's school one night and asked me to spar. That's when he beat me so bad. I told him I wanted to become one of his students, and he accepted. So I started training in earnest with him in 1967, and it continued through 1970.

JB: What kind of training did you do?

LH: Everything was simple, but it was based on timing. Bruce said it's better to have five good things you can use than one hundred things you cannot.

JB: Did you use a particular art? He was known for wing chun.

LH: Well, Dan and Bruce experimented with different arts. It was blending several northern kung-fu kicking styles with boxing—Thai boxing. It was before he came up with the concept of JKD. He was basing it on the four ranges: kicking range, boxing range, trapping range, and grappling range. It was the best way to cover that distance and go in. And it was a lot of conditioning. Class would last about two-and-a-half hours. There was a lot of sparring with body armor—the old navy head gear, the boxing gloves, and what not.

JB: So you would learn a concept and actually try it out in sparring with protective gear?

LH: Yes. It was timing also.

JB: What did other martial artists think of Bruce Lee at the time?

LH: They thought Bruce was cocky. But he had a right to be. He trained the best and the best came to him. At that time, though, Joe Lewis, Mike Stone, Chuck Norris—all those guys came to him.

JB: Did you work out with Stone, Lewis, and Norris?

LH: No, not with Lewis or Norris. I worked out with Stone. He used to come down on Saturdays when he was in town. He'd come in and work out with us at the old Chinatown school.

JB: Were you doing any of the kali back then?

LH: Dan had me doing some for personal protection.

JB: What did it look like back then? Nowadays, I think,



Figure 11. Kali practiced by Dick Harrell (left) and Larry Hartsell (right) at jeet kune do seminar.

when people see the JKD, they see the kali system.

LH: Back then, there wasn't any kali in it because Bruce was working on the trapping and the boxing, and he was also adding grappling techniques and choking as you've seen in some of his movies.

JB: So at the time, it was mostly trapping, to boxing, to grappling?

LH: Right.

JB: And that's really what you've focused on, isn't it?

LH: Yes. I've added a lot more concepts, such as the Filipino locking. But Bruce gave me the key to sort of open up my own door. What he said was to take what is useful and create specifically what is your own. You have to do that. No two people think or move the same. Some are more passive and some are more aggressive. You can't mold everyone into a group. You have to give them a base move and let them create from there.

JB: You were known as the premiere fighter of the JKD.

LH: That started with Ed Parker. We used to get a lot of challenges. I'd fight. I used to put my gi on and Parker held me down to a brown belt, and I'd be sparring black belts. Then when I went with Bruce, we had a lot of Chinese people wanting to come in and spar. I was usually the one who ended up on the mats. But back then is when we were experimenting with the body to arm to full-contact methods.

JB: I've heard it said that, at the time, Bruce was using the term *wing chun*, but he had incorporated the boxing and other arts, and so to some of the Chinese who came to see the wing chun, it didn't look like wing chun.

LH: Yes, but when they saw us move . . . We had one group come in to spar and Bruce said he wanted to have us guys warm up. When they saw us move and make contact to the leg, going into the walls, and bobbing and weaving, they excused themselves from the school and went on.

JB: How much fighting did Bruce Lee do?

LH: Bruce had people challenge him, and he'd go rounds with anybody. Later on in Hong Kong, he had quite a few fights. A lot of people were jealous of him. Most of his fights were for real.

JB: Did you see him in any of these fights? Were you with him when he actually beat someone up?

LH: No. Dan's seen him in a couple. I've seen guys tell Bruce what they could do, not in a fighting situation, and Bruce would counter their moves. I brought a 246-pound guy to his house and Bruce just racked him right to the wall.

JB: How would you define jeet kune do?

LH: As a concept. Actually, a means to the way of stopping fists is the original name. The way I'd define it is your own creativity. Bruce said to not let my truth be your truth. In other words, create your own from the bases given.

JB: If a person wanted to start JKD, is there some base art that he should start with?

LH: Well, it's what he's into because JKD is a concept for a lot of different systems. If you're in a locking system such as aikido, or judo, a throwing system, or grappling, well, you can basically start anywhere. That's what Bruce did.

JB: Is there a popular art that most JKD practitioners at least experiment with?

LH: I think trapping. I think everyone enjoys the trapping. A lot of them enjoy the boxing phase. Now, we're sort of bringing out the Thai boxing at our schools in Los Angeles. I think that's becoming pretty big. And now the latest thing is silat and pentjak-silat. I enjoy it. I enjoy the throwing, the tripping, and the offsetting of the centerline.

JB: Do you see any new arts coming into the JKD spectrum?

LH: I think the pentjak-silat is the latest one and some of the Indonesian martial arts. It's very similar to kali, to the Filipino arts.

JB: You don't hear too much about karate here. What would be the problem with karate?

LH: Well, we still use some kenpo.

JB: What would you use from it?

LH: Well, from the Ed Parker days, it was similar. Actually, Ed added escrima, which is a Filipino method, and also, from kenpo, my footwork has been made easier and some of the techniques of kali also. In my grappling, I credit some of the moves to jujutsu, or to aikido. I give credit to different arts. And then I might say a particular block is from many different systems. There are similarities between martial arts. We sort of got into a kickboxing phase. It's bad to say boxing

or kickboxing is from karate. Originally they tried to call it sport karate. I say it's just boxing. All those guys went to boxing coaches to learn how to use their hands better. It didn't come from karate.

JB: There seems to be an element of boxing that sets people free or overlaps between these different arts.

LH: I think with boxing you can move and slip and circle. You don't necessarily have to be on a straight line of attack. Bruce saw the fallacy in that. Even wing chun has that straight line. But sometimes you have to circle—you have to sidestep and then employ what we call angulation attack, that is to come in at an angle. So you have to shift, learn how to sidestep and go from there. That's why we have all this footwork. That's why Bruce didn't want to give all this out, originally. He researched a lot of different arts. He had the grappling from Gene LeBell who still, to me, is one of the baddest dudes around. At fifty-eight years old, he can still do it. He can hurt you. And every Monday night it's an open thing. Anybody who wants to go down and put the gi on and get down on the mats, any way they want to do it, he'll do it. He's researched a lot of systems—the praying mantis, wing chun, northern kung-fu styles, boxing. We used to watch movies up at Bruce's house on these old fighters—Rocky Marciano, Joe Louis—and it was a lot of fun. We used to play them backwards to see how the punches would come and then watch them forward again.

JB: What would you do at a session like that? Would he lecture or what?

LH: We would talk and research and we'd work out.

JB: Did he talk about martial arts all the time or did he have any hobbies?

LH: He enjoyed books. I drove him down to Beverly Hills one time. There was this old book on a gentleman's self-defense from the early 1800s from England—you know, when they had those squirrel hats like in the 1700s. I think he paid \$300 or \$400 for that book.

JB: So even the books he enjoyed were martial arts related.

LH: Yes. Martial arts was it. But we talked about other things, too.

JB: You and Dan are the only two instructors who travel and do seminars who actually studied under Bruce Lee.

LH: Yes, we've done the most seminars.

JB: Dan seems to be most interested in using kali as his vehicle for teaching JKD, and you tend to use boxing and grappling and trapping.

LH: I like to have one specialty. That's my base and that's what I really like. But I've been cross training with kali and I'm an instructor in that. I'm an associate instructor in kali and a full instructor in JKD and Jun Fan boxing. But that's what people want me for. It's like this: you can specialize in ten things, but if you specialize in three, you'll be better at those three. The more I experiment and the more I teach, the more I learn through my students. Teaching is a learning method. I really believe that.

JB: Where do you see JKD going in the next five to ten years?

LH: I think that now the European doors are opening. We have apprentice instructors in Europe. It's going to be a big thing. More and more people will be coming up under us. Even though it's sort of loosely knit the way Dan and I do it, they can come and study under us or invite us for seminars. Usually it doesn't end when the seminar ends. They keep us up all night picking up information. It's like anything. You can become good at any art if you put the time in. But to just go to a seminar for four hours and think that's it—that you know it all—you won't learn anything. You never know it all.

JB: How does a person go through the ranks in JKD?

LH: We have changed our ranking system so many times. We went through a T-shirt ranking system where we changed the colors, we went through certificates, at one time we went to Bruce Lee's old ranking system on a yearly basis. Now we have four basic ranks for seminar people and people coming up under us: apprentice instructor, associate instructor, full instructor, and senior instructor. We're in a constant state of change in JKD.

JB: What does it take to become an apprentice instructor?

LH: We usually judge by character and the number of seminars completed. Character you cannot give. Training in an art you can give. If people have open minds, we can fill them. It's like the old saying about the empty cup being filled while the full cup can't be.

JB: Is there a time limit on how long it takes to become an apprentice?

LH: Not really. It's done on an individual basis.

JB: Have you turned people down?

LH: Yes. We usually tell them to give it more time.

JB: How long would a person remain an apprentice before moving up?

LH: That's up to him. Our camp is such a good opportunity—you get fifty-five hours of training. It's how much time and effort you want to put in.

JB: Is there a certain responsibility to becoming an apprentice instructor? Does it mean you can teach students?

LH: Yes, you can teach them what you've learned, but you can't give out ranks or do seminars.

JB: What about an associate instructor?

LH: They can conduct seminars through us. A full instructor is free to do as he pleases. The senior instructors have put in the most time, and they're over the full instructors. It's simple. There's nothing elaborate about it. I was ranked about ten years ago, shortly after Bruce died. And I'm sort of in limbo between senior and full because I went back to North Carolina. I had to come back and relearn everything, especially the kali system. I didn't start my kali training until about 1973. And everywhere Dan would go, I had to do the same thing these apprentices do. I had to go to seminars Dan was giving, I had to chase him in California, I had him fly to North Carolina to learn from him.

JB: When you were teaching in Charlotte, there was talk that you were screening some people out of the kung-fu school. But were you teaching primarily boxing, trapping, and grappling?

LH: Yes. I was teaching what I was authorized to teach at that time—the kickboxing phase. That's when I met Dicky Harrell. At that time I made everyone fight. I wanted to know what they had so far as contact. Some people don't believe the time and training you have to put in to be a fighter. I compare it to *Rocky*. You have to get up and do that work in the morning, you have to diet—live somewhat like a monk.

JB: As you look back on it now, how did you guys feel when Bruce Lee died?

LH: I didn't believe it at first. I got about fifteen calls from



Figure 12. At Fred Degerberg's Chicago Jeet Kune Do Summer Camp, 1984. Left to right: Unidentified participant, Cliff Lenderman, Ann and Vic Payne, Jerry Beasley, and Larry Hartsell.

Los Angeles. I went up to the mountains, kicked back, and thought about it. Then Dan called me and told me that Bruce was dead and that he didn't want JKD to die with him. He wanted me to start a small club. And we've stayed in contact all these years.

JB: Most of the JKD clubs are small, aren't they?

LH: Most of them. But now we've got some groups, like one in Minnesota, that have forty to fifty people. They've seen how good it is and they like it. I'm pretty proud of it because we've researched it.

JB: Would you say that this is a positive step forward for JKD? It's a little different from what Bruce was doing, but maybe he gave you the floor plan and now you've built something from it.

LH: It's like I said before. He gave us the base and then comes the creativity. We'll give you A and B. But then you have to find C, D, E, and F yourself. You'd be surprised. The kali and the JKD concepts are very similar, in regard to self-discovery. Their way of teaching—especially in the Filipino arts where they give you so much and you discover the

rest yourself—makes you learn and never forget it.

JB: Do you think Bruce would be proud of what's going on now?

LH: In some ways, maybe not, but in other ways, I think he would be. I know he'd be proud of the progression—the way we've expanded on what we had, the locking, the trapping, the kali we've brought in—we didn't have all this in '67-'68. Dan's still studying. I'm still studying. In other words, we haven't said this is it and there's no more. There can never be a state where there's no more. Back in the sixties, Bruce was a little jealous. He kept it to a small group. He wanted it kept low-key.

JB: I've heard of the JKD Society. Is that still around?

LH: Yes. All of us older guys are on the advisory committee. There are meetings once a month, and they're trying to get it into a more organized and structured state. The reason we have it is because there are so many people claiming to teach JKD—and we don't even know them. We've never heard of them.

JB: So this gives you some kind of control and a way to route JKD for the future?

LH: Right. You've got to have some control. And we're sort of a loosely knit organization.

JOE LEWIS

In 1967, names that we respect today, like Bruce Lee, jeet kune do, and Dan Inosanto, were virtually unnoticed, if not unheard of, in the greater martial arts community. And although Lee had gained some identity as a fictional martial arts hero, his true celebrity status among martial artists was, at best, only beginning. The heroes of the late 1960s were the tournament champions best known as the golden boys of a bygone era. Joe Lewis, Chuck Norris, and Mike Stone were the champions whose reputations as effective fighters were seldom questioned.

Lewis, Norris, and Stone each worked with Bruce Lee, but it was Joe Lewis who spent perhaps the most time and unquestionably gained the more innovative insights from Lee. Lewis, who earned his black belt in a record seven months in Okinawa, entered and won his first national tournament in Washington, D.C., in 1966. An all around martial artist, Lewis not only won kumite, but kata as well. Before and after he created full-contact karate/kickboxing in 1970, Lewis was the most feared fighter of his day. It was because of his tournament reputation that Lewis was approached by Lee with the idea of working together. And for the next few years, the two enjoyed a close relationship.

The reader should keep in mind that at the time of their relationship, Lewis was the “known” fighter. By positioning himself as Lewis’ trainer, Lee had much to gain in terms of the recognition he so passionately desired. Yet, in the final analysis, it was Lewis who would benefit the most.

Today, Lewis enjoys an enviable position as one of the most sought-after seminar performers in this country. A former point, semi-contact, and full-contact world champion, Lewis was voted by his peers (in a 1983 *Karate Illustrated* poll) as the greatest fighter of all time. Although this multiple hall of fame inductee is seldom identified with the Bruce Lee group, he stands alone as the most successful competitor to ever have worked with Bruce Lee.

I began training with Joe in 1982, just as he began to take an interest in re-entering full-contact karate competition. According to Lewis, his statements regarding Bruce Lee have often been taken out of context and have, at times, appeared



Figure 13. Joe Lewis

to be derogatory. For a number of years, I have recognized Joe's true appreciation for Bruce. In spite of the fact that there seemed to be some distance between the known JKD clan and Joe Lewis, it is my opinion that both camps share in the principles that compose JKD. The cultural arts—kali, wing chun, and Thai boxing for the JKD clan, and contact karate, wrestling, and boxing for Lewis—are obviously different. Nevertheless, it has been my goal to first understand the principles behind the arts of JKD and, for this reason, I have attempted to reunite the two groups, at least for the purpose of this book. The reader will see that they do, in fact, share the unmistakable common link—the philosophy of Bruce Lee.

Jerry Beasley: When did you first hear of Bruce Lee?

Joe Lewis: The first time I met him was at the Mayflower Hotel. We were both guests at the 1967 U.S. National Championships in Washington, D.C. I met him in the lobby. He came up and introduced himself to me. I was defending champion of the tournament. Robert Culp from the "I Spy" series and Bruce Lee from "The Green Hornet" series were the other two invited guests. I was with Bob Wall at the time we met him. The next time I met Bruce Lee was at the *Black Belt* magazine office on Washington Boulevard in Culvert City, California. They had my name and Skipper Mullins' mixed up and they called him Skipper Lewis in an article, so I just went over there and mentioned it to them. As I left the building to get in my car, Bruce Lee called me over in the parking lot and reintroduced himself, saying he wanted to talk to me. I sat there and listened to him and he started to pitch to me on becoming my instructor. He talked to me and showed me all these different moves. Then the next time we crossed paths was after Mike Stone started taking some lessons with Bruce. Mike Stone, Bob Wall, and I had been putting together this nightclub act. It was just some hokey stuff. We'd show up and pick on Bob Wall and tell jokes and do some self-defense techniques and then Mike Stone and I would spar. Mike Stone started telling us about this guy Bruce Lee who was phenomenal with all the different techniques he was doing. I had a lot of respect for what Mike believed in because he didn't believe in much of anything. So for him to compliment somebody unknown like Bruce

Lee was strange. As a matter of fact, I can't remember ever hearing Mike Stone compliment anyone. I can't remember exactly how, but a short time after that, Bruce and I got together and started working out. This was in 1968, right before I sold my karate studio to Chuck Norris—very early in 1968. It was interesting because I won eleven straight tournaments—consecutive tournaments—after I started working with Bruce Lee. It was like no one could beat me. The "Green Hornet" series had only run one year and he was drawing residuals off that. I think he told me he was getting about \$15,000 a year off that and that was what he was living on. And then, from time to time, he would do private lessons. He said he had about seven private lesson students, and guys like Sterling Siliphant, James Coburn, and Joe Hyams. He would charge them \$500 for a ten-lesson course and he would always get it in advance. I don't know how active he was at teaching because charging \$50 an hour back in those days wouldn't bring in that many students. I was charging \$25 back then but I didn't have that many students paying me \$25 an hour. So I'd go to his house once a week. We'd set up an appointment and . . .

JB: Did you pay him?

JL: No. I think he wanted the prestige of being able to say that he was a master and that his students were national champions. At the time, I think he was about twenty-seven years old or so. He was two years older than I was and he didn't get a lot of respect because of his age—I mean, from the kung-fu world. He wanted to be considered a master and when they wouldn't call him that, it really hurt his feelings. He didn't get any respect from the kung-fu masters during that time. He didn't believe in the system of having to pay your dues or waiting for a certain length of time. He felt that he had the knowledge then and had the ability and he just never used the term, "paying your dues." I don't either, so I don't relate to it.

JB: He could have entered tournaments and built a reputation like you did.

JL: No. He didn't like tournament fighting because he thought it was all hokey. Of course, most of the kung-fu guys said that. So I went along with that aspect. We started working together at least once a week.

JB: What did you do at these workouts?

JL: They weren't workouts. They were teaching exchange sessions. About the only thing he got from me was that I taught him a lot about vitamins and nutrients, like protein powders and things like that. And I showed him some different exercises with weights to build his body up because he was self-conscious about his narrow chest. He had a flat rib cage and his legs were really skinny and that kind of bugged him. He wanted some meat on his body. He was 5'7" and weighed about 138 at that time, and he had been lifting for awhile. He was really strong, but he had no muscle mass. And that comes from just not eating. He showed me a lot of fighting principles and, primarily, he added mobility to what I was doing. He helped me concentrate a lot more on exploding on my initial move (which I was doing anyway), but he made me more cognizant of it. Here's an example: We were taught to explode on the side stance with the side kick in Okinawa. Well, he sees me fighting in tournaments and he sees that I'm exploding and I'm blasting that side kick in there. I know they didn't teach a side kick in kung-fu, but I go to his house and here's this little sucker blasting the side kick at this bag and I'm saying, well, it's just like mine, you know, and then he's trying to tell me how to improve my side kick. I've already won a national championship, kicking everybody's butts with the thing, but what he said to me improved my confidence. It enabled me to better identify what I was doing. I was just intuitively doing something and he was able to give a label to it. Now, obviously, he had to get the majority of what he knew from other sources because he didn't go out on the tournament floor and do it himself. Therefore, where did he get it from? That's what creativity is all about—taking something from one source and something from another source and putting it together. So that's what he was doing. Nothing wrong with that. I was curious as to how he could help me. Because of Bruce I added different things to the techniques that I was already doing. I was trying to maximize the effectiveness of my movements. The way I could do that was not so much in focusing on techniques, but on adding new dimensions to the techniques I already knew. A lot of his ideas came from fencing manuals. I think his brother was a fencer, too, and he picked up a lot of movements there.

Plus, he was a very good dancer and a lot of his ability with footwork came from that. Primarily, he emphasized footwork to me and the importance of using distance and mobility against an opponent.

JB: But you never sparred with him?

JL: No. Well, he never really sparred with anybody when I was around. We put gloves and head gear on at times and we'd do a couple of drills, but not real sparring where you go three minutes and rest a minute, three minutes and rest a minute. He was not in my weight class. I weighed about 196 at the time, and there was a period when I got over 200 pounds when I was working with him. But no, we never really sparred. He would only do the drills, kind of controlled sparring, back then. I always called it controlled or academic sparring, but it's not sparring—not in the sense of almost fighting.

JB: Did he teach you the concept of the angles of attack that you made famous?

JL: He came up with the terms *direct* and *indirect* angular attack and the term *broken rhythm*. I don't know exactly where that came from, maybe it was the fencing, but it applies to the footwork. At the time, I didn't understand it because he presented it in terms of kung-fu. So what I did was use the words, the conceptual part, and I created my own movements for it. I learned the fakes on my own, mainly by going into boxing gyms and just looking at myself in the mirror and being realistic about how to move. I tried to figure out ways of identifying broken rhythm in the tournament sense. You see, kung-fu techniques are different than tournament techniques.

JB: Are you saying he showed you kung-fu techniques to explain his ideas and that you did not relate to the kung-fu?

JL: Yeah. Of course. He didn't box using orthodox Western boxing. He boxed using the vertical fist. The hands—one fist in front of the other, in front of his chin—were from kung-fu. In Western boxing you keep a horizontal fist instead of a vertical fist, and you keep your hands on each side of your head. In other words, you guard the sides of your head, not the front of it. So that's one aspect of what he was doing that I didn't think I could relate to. He believed in putting

the power side forward. In other words, if you are right-handed, you put the right side forward. Well, the theory worked very well, but one thing he lacked was sufficient experience. A lot of his knowledge came out of books and manuals and his own abstract thinking and, of course, controlled sparring. But, like I said, there's nothing wrong with that. It's just that I see fighting as bone against bone—the art of drawing blood. I never got the feeling that Bruce was a violent person or that he really enjoyed streetfighting.

JB: Why do you think Bruce was so interested in fighting arts if he, as you say, did little competitive fighting?

JL: I could only make guesses about that. I can only assume that he felt undernourished in some respects. He felt invisible and very misunderstood by people around him. I felt that he needed attention—a sense of people looking at him and feeling that he was significantly meaningful in some respects. In other words, could he and did he affect other people? He didn't want to be looked at as just a kung-fu expert. That was the label he had and it was hard for him to shake. It hurt him in Hollywood when he tried to get the “Kung Fu” television series. He experienced a lot of rejection and that added to and complicated his problem, I think. I call it a problem because I think it was. I think Bruce was very charming and very friendly and all the things you might like in a person, but I think a lot of it came out of his being starved for love from other people. I don't think he got a lot of it.

JB: Do you consider yourself a Bruce Lee student?

JL: I did at one time.

JB: When you started the kickboxing in 1970, were you still in contact with Bruce Lee?

JL: No. We hated each other at that time.

JB: What do you mean?

JL: It all began in 1969. I went to the International Karate Championships in Long Beach. He was seated at ringside. That particular morning when I came in there to sign up for the fight, after I had gone through eliminations, they handed me this application. I never used to fill out these applications to fight in tournaments, so I said, “Screw them.” They still handed me the application, with all this nonsense stuff on it, like what sex are you, who is your instructor,

what rank are you, what school are you from. I thought, hey man, I've got on a black belt and you've got my five bucks. Just let me fight. I always just put my name on the applications and signed—and that's it. I wouldn't give them all that information. To me, it was just no one's business who my instructor was, what school I was from, or what rank I was. But that particular day they insisted that I fill it out. I put down my instructor was John Korab because John Korab was the guy who taught me how to spar. So I put Okinawa Te as the style. I never thought of putting Bruce Lee as my instructor or jeet kune do as my style. Bruce would ask me to go out and tell people that he was my instructor, but I wouldn't do it just to give him some publicity because that was what he wanted. I guess we were both a little childish back then. Well, that night I got up there to fight and I won the grand championship. Just before my match, the announcer on the microphone says, "Joe Lewis, his instructor—John Korab, his style—Okinawa Te." They had never done that at a tournament before, read all that stuff off. Well, I didn't think anything of it. I found out later, through the grapevine, that it really pissed Bruce Lee off, that it just blew him away. And he considered me a punk after that. Those were his exact words. He thought that was real low-down and punkish-childish of me. And I thought, why did he take what that announcer said as an attack against him? I could never put that together and I didn't know how to talk back in those days or think in a socially mature manner, so all I could do was either get real pissed off and attack somebody or just turn around and walk away. We were still friends because he wouldn't tell me he was mad because of that. I was married at that time and Bruce and I were seeing each other quite a bit socially. So, my wife went over there to fix his hair one time. She was going to streak his hair. She was always trying to separate me from all my friends—all of them—because she wanted me all to herself. So she would always conjure up stories to separate us. Well, I didn't figure that out until it was too late. She came back from fixing Bruce's hair and said he had made a pass at her. Her description of the incident was a little more detailed than that. It's been years and I can't fully remember it, but it pissed me off. I had just got back from a photo session.

I was wearing a suit and tie, so I went up to Bruce Lee's house and knocked on the door because I partly wanted to kick his butt. Another part of me said to be cool, be a gentleman. I had mixed feelings about it. Anyway, I knocked on the door. Linda answered the door and she called Bruce. Bruce came to the door and opened it. I just talked to him through the screen. I said, "I want to talk to you." He said, "Yeah, about what?" I said, "Well, my wife told me that you made a pass at her." He just acted like he was shocked, like it was ridiculous. He said, "Linda, come here. Tell Linda what you just said." Then I started feeling like a fool, like, hey, I didn't expect that reaction. I thought he would get pissed and jump out there and he and I would have it out. But no, they just told me to take off and I took off and never saw him again. So that ended our relationship. In other words, with the help of the announcer at the karate tournament and with the help of my wife, my relationship with Bruce Lee was quickly ended. I had a phone conversation with him one time after that and he basically called me a punk and that's when he told me that I had not given him credit for being my instructor. I guess the whole Bruce Lee group turned against me by then. After he died, I just stayed out of the picture.

JB: With respect to him?

JL: Yeah. I just didn't want my name associated with his anymore. I felt like he was who he was and doing his thing, and I was who I was and I didn't want to lean on him and I didn't want him to lean on me. After he died I heard a film producer in Hollywood say, "His death was like a two-million-dollar publicity campaign." And Warner Brothers milked it for all it was worth. Believe me, all those stories and junk coming out about him dying by a delayed death touch and all that stuff was all made up. It was nonsense. I don't think there was anybody in Hong Kong who could have nailed him with a punch, anyway. By kung-fu standards he was a god; he was the superior master. I always tried to protect Bruce behind his back. When he was alive people put him down. As soon as he died, everybody started talking good about him. "Oh, yeah, I knew Bruce Lee." "Oh, yeah, Bruce Lee and I were friends." And those who talked good when he was still alive switched on him when he died. They

started putting him down. I never understood that. I always remained consistent. If I felt that I couldn't afford to tell the truth, I just kept my mouth shut. Like a lot of times when I would be asked in interviews whether Bruce Lee was my instructor, I would always say no. I just didn't want to deal with it because I knew that I was going to get into all these issues that I didn't want to talk about. For a while, people would ask me how Bruce would rate as a fighter. Well, I am a fighter, so I can make my evaluations objectively. Even so, whenever I would say something about Bruce that someone didn't like, personality would be read into it. I say if you don't want the truth, don't ask for it.

JB: Do you feel like he showed you a lot about fighting?

JL: He was a very good teacher. He had hundreds of books in all the different dialects of Chinese, of all the fighting artists that he had read about. He read about wrestling and he read about boxing. He had hundreds of boxing manuals—Western boxing. And he had dozens and dozens of films on fighters. We used to sit down and analyze each film. Some of our favorites were Muhammad Ali, Jack Dempsey—those types. We would study the strategies of different fighters on film and then we would go to tournaments and watch guys fight, and we would analyze them together. At times, I was like the test tube. I would go out and get in the streetfight or I'd go out in a tournament and I'd prove whether it worked or not. You can't have a better setup than that. We would watch boxing on TV and do the same thing, so it's like a research center, like research laboratory. I thought it was the greatest life that ever existed. And I don't think there was ever anything like it before or ever will be again.

Chapter 3

The Next Generation

Although Bruce Lee worked with very small groups during his lifetime, this handful of instructors has been successful in training a substantial number of what may be called second-generation JKD enthusiasts. According to Dan, Tim Tackett is among the most eloquent speakers in the current JKD clan. With a recommendation like that, it became apparent that we would need to seek out Mr. Tackett.

At first glance, and thus maintaining the non-stereotype of JKD instructors, Tim Tackett does not give one the impression that he is a skilled martial artist. Nevertheless, he is quite capable of captivating large groups of students with both his skill and teaching finesse. Tim has an extraordinary ability to break down each technique into easily understandable parts. Learning is facilitated by Tackett's method.

A schoolteacher by profession, Tim has, along with Larry Hartsell and others, authored several JKD books. With Tim, we wanted to discuss the teaching methods used by Bruce Lee and ascertain a better understanding of the development of JKD. Tim began his interview with an adjusted quote from Bruce Lee which gives the reader a feeling for Bruce's attitude toward teaching JKD.



Figure 14. Tim Tackett

Tim Tackett: If knowledge is power, then don't pass it on indiscriminately. In other words, if what you're doing in the martial arts is different—and when I first started taking it, it was so much different than what you see out there in the karate, that we could literally, at that time, play with them—then why have everybody learn it, if you have something special? So a lot of our JKD attitude, even today, is that a lot of the old backyard type of things aren't even taught, except to a select few. You have to be careful of who you teach. Then it's more of a treasured gift.

Jerry Beasley: Did you actually study with Bruce?

TT: No, I didn't. I'm second generation. How it all started was kind of interesting. I studied in Taiwan when I was in the service. I was a recreation specialist, so I worked swings. And my wife was teaching in the American schools there. She worked days and I had some of my days free. So I ended up with three different instructors working seven hours a day. Then when I went to work, I wasn't really working. I was handing out Ping-Pong balls and that kind of thing—playing cards with the guys, calling bingo, picking up bar girls, taking them to dances and bringing them back on the bus, and chaperoning dances. So I had a lot of opportunity to train. Then I got back to the States and opened a school to help support me through college. I met Dan in 1965. There weren't too many karate schools around then—and hardly any kung-fu at all. I didn't even know what kung-fu was. It wasn't a term they used much in China—maybe in Canton or Hong Kong, but not in Taiwan. I saw a picture of a guy in a mask doing a kung-fu ad in a magazine when *Black Belt* first came out. I asked my teacher what it was—there were these Chinese characters and all—and he said he didn't know. I started working with karate guys in different towns. I traded and worked with them and got a black belt in shorin. I met Dan in 1965 when I went to Ed Parker's school. I hadn't opened a school yet. I just wanted to see one. Parker had me demonstrate some techniques and then I went out to eat with Dan Inosanto and some other black belts. And later, I'd see Dan at tournaments. I went to the 1967 internationals where Bruce was demonstrating, and I thought he was pretty good. But I had seen a lot of stuff in Taiwan. So I decided I wouldn't mind working with him and studying with him.

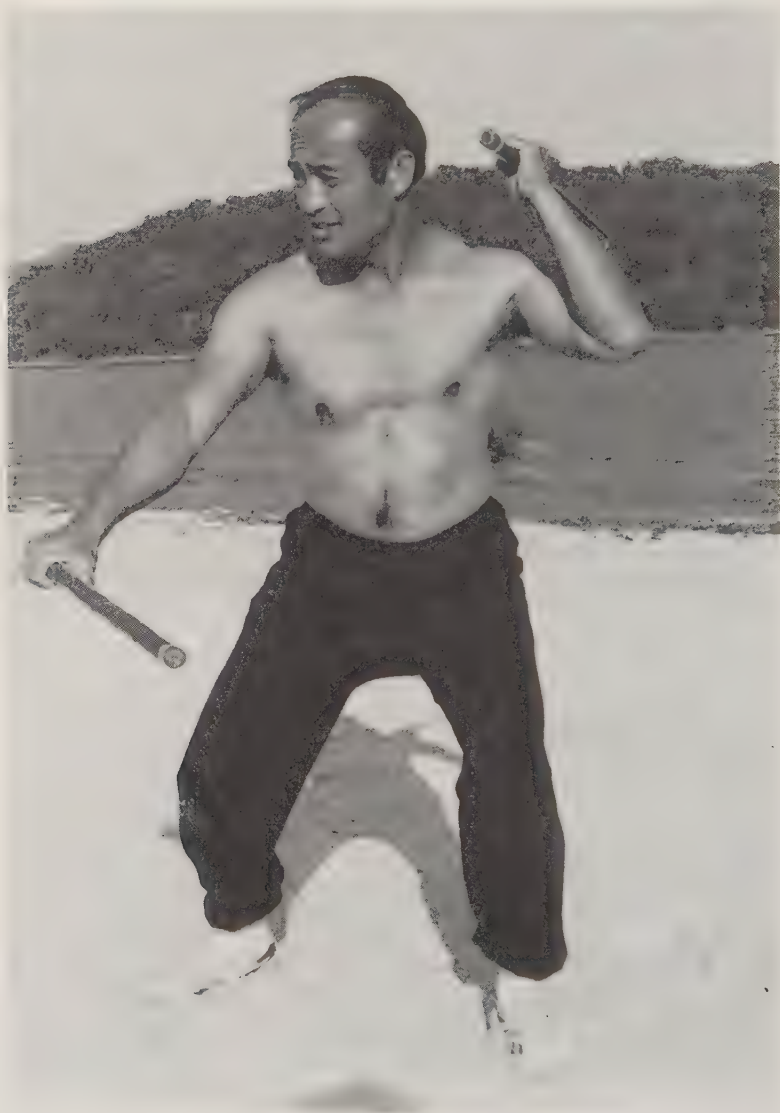


Figure 15. Dan Inosanto

But I wasn't overawed because I had seen a lot of really great things in Taiwan. I saw guys pound nails through four-by-fours with their foreheads. And I had helped demonstrate and had sparred with them. I knew the kung-fu guys in Taiwan. And so I thought Bruce was good—no question about it. But what he was showing in the demonstration wasn't what he was all about. So in about 1969-70, my first student and I were getting bored with karate. I decided, because I had studied tai chi in Taiwan, to go down to Chinatown and take a tai chi class. There was this guy who was in one of the magazines and I went to his school. He was from China. I went in and he asked if I'd had any previous training. I said yes and he asked me what style—the yang, the chang . . . I said I didn't know. I just knew I'd had tai chi and everywhere I looked, there was something different. I never saw two that were similar in Taiwan. So I showed him my tai chi and his assistant instructor, Danny Lee, followed me out when I left. I don't know why. He said I wouldn't learn anything there from the guy because I would be a threat, having had some tai chi training. He asked if I knew Dan Inosanto and I said yes. He said Dan had a small backyard type of group and gave me an unlisted phone number. He asked if I'd heard of Bruce Lee and jeet kune do. I said yes and expressed an interest in trying it. So I called Dan. He said to come on, but that it was no big deal—just a few guys getting together. So I went—this was about 1970. Bruce had gone off to make a movie and Dan was teaching. It just blew me away. At first, when you have some background and try to relate it to what you know, you find similarities. But then I started to realize that it was quite different. I think there's a misunderstanding about jeet kune do—that he took from here, here, and here, and made chop suey. It's not that way at all.

JB: How would you define it?

TT: Okay, Bruce takes a fencing book and looks at it, and finds the five ways of attack in fencing—that's where it comes from. Now, his genius was to relate that to the empty hands and to be creative with it. So he created a lot of stuff himself, like getting power in a front kick. For instance, when he started doing a hook kick, it was a lot more powerful than what everybody else was doing. And then how to get that hook



Figure 16. The pope of jeet kune do.

kick in—that wasn't taken from anywhere. That was from Bruce himself. He may have taken a concept from fencing of progressive and direct attack, but to look at that, adapt it, build on it, and put it into an empty hand system, took real genius.

JB: Is there a particular book that he worked from for the fencing concepts?

TT: I bought a fencing book once and it had a lot of the stuff that *Tao* had. And there's a big misconception about *The Tao of Jeet Kune Do*. What the deal was there was that Bruce was just like anybody. He would come up with ideas or he would read something and think that a certain philosophy was something he wanted to remember and have and study. So he'd write it down for his own personal notes—not for a book. And then he thought about the different possibilities for putting together a book. So some of it was his ideas on technique, some of it was about a particular chapter in a boxing book. He's got philosophy in there from all over the place. After he died, they gathered those notes together and published it as a book that he wrote. It wasn't. And most of what we were doing isn't in there because what was there were his notes. He didn't need notes on what we were doing. There was some information on the ways of attack but not much else. So people look at it and think it's Bruce's jeet kune do. It isn't. It's just notes on what he happened to be interested in at the time.

JB: Can you define jeet kune do?

TT: I can define what the words mean—the way of the intercepting attack. I think there's some root kinds of things in there. You can take a little from here and a little from there, but there's a thread that ties it together. That thread is jeet kune do—being able to look at it through various principles of efficiency. It's a lot of self-analysis. Everybody is a little bit different, but there still is a root to it. I could take a Korean system and combine it with boxing and have kickboxing, but where's the jeet kune do? It's to be able to recognize and to be able to fit into any environment.

JB: How does a person have jeet kune do?

TT: Well, it's to be able to fit into any environment, to be able to flow from grappling to boxing, to be able to flow from long-range to close-range. You can't always pick your



Figure 17. Dan Inosanto and wife Paula demonstrate silat at jeet kune do camp.

environment. A lot of martial arts are taught within a specific environment. They're taught, maybe, as punching and kicking, or maybe throwing and locking. You can be very good at one thing. Like Dan always says, what would you rather have if you had to go into combat? Would you rather have a knife or a hand grenade? Well, that's not as simple as you might think. If you're in a phone booth, the hand grenade won't do you any good. So jeet kune do is to be able to survive in any environment, using whatever means you can. And, at the same time, it's being able to stay within principles—

not rules or laws. Here's a way to stand that's better than other ways. It's more efficient. You should have mobility. You should be able to move.

JB: Are there principles written down or can you define them?

TT: If you're teaching a class, you work on different principles. You might work on, let's say, interception. Let's say you're going to use the term *jeet kune do* at its basic meaning—intercepting attack. That's a very simple concept. All it means is that when you start to attack me, I intercept your attack. A lot of martial arts are taught in a block, hit—one, two—manner. At a more efficient level is a simultaneous block and hit. At an even more efficient level my mind is set so that as soon as you move my hand hits you. Before you can hit me, I intercept. And then at an even more advanced level, when you have the intention of hitting me, I hit you before you even start to hit me. That's the highest level of *jeet kune do*. What Bruce did at the beginning level—when you first walked in—was to work at the highest level possible.

JB: How would a person start in JKD?

TT: Well, in the old days? Or now? Or with what teacher . . .

JB: How about the old days?

TT: There are different generations. Some people have a very strong kali base. Some people have a very strong Western boxing base. Some people have a very strong wing chun base. They're going to teach the concepts through that art. And then there are different phases of *jeet kune do*. There's a grappling phase, a boxing phase, a kickboxing phase, a locking phase . . . So if you walked into, let's say, my class, we might be working on grappling and you might look at a couple of classes and conclude that *jeet kune do* is wrestling. Because you're dealing with concepts, you're not dealing with a linear progression. You're picking up all kinds of things at one time. It's sort of circular. You can start right away. It may take a couple of weeks to get the basics—footwork, punches, kicks. They are all the common thread. After that, you can go right into whatever phase or concept we're dealing with—intercepting, trapping, progressive and direct attack, defense against trapping, energy drills and so on.

JB: Is there a set lesson plan?



Figure 18. Fred Degerberg demonstrates streetfighting techniques at jeet kune do camp.

TT: That depends on the teacher. There's no set curriculum. It's up to each individual person who Dan thinks is capable of teaching. He doesn't like to use the term *jeet kune do*, but he allows us to use it. That's primarily, I think, because he promised Bruce that he wouldn't do it. We never wanted to have franchised jeet kune do schools, so Dan has chosen to take the kali and go on with it. A few people are still saying they think we ought to do a little of the jeet kune do to keep it alive—so that it's not just in the backyard. The main reason I do that, frankly, is because there are a

lot of fakes out there who claim to have studied with Bruce Lee. Especially right after he died; there were jeet kune do schools popping up all over the place, and they weren't for real. So by teaching some of it, people learn that these guys are fakes.

JB: What happened after Bruce Lee died? Did you guys decide to quit? Did you continue to practice?

TT: We went right to working out in the backyard. That's how Bruce would have wanted it. But we were still just a group of twelve people.

JB: And you decided to come out to clear up those misconceptions?

TT: We were closing JKD schools within the area. There was a guy who got Dan's number and called him up to say he was Bruce Lee's cousin. He was a Korean guy. And he wanted to come by and see if we were doing it right, if we were doing the real jeet kune do. So he came in—I wasn't there that night—and we figured out he would have had to have trained with Bruce when he was six years old. And we know everybody who studied with Bruce. So this guy opened a school and I went by to visit—it was in my area. We finally had a patch made after Bruce died. We decided we needed a name. Anyway, I went to the place—it was called Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do School. I went in and he started demonstrating jeet kune do, and it was all that movie stuff! In the movies, the jeet kune do was in there, but it was very hidden. Anyway, he finally stopped teaching.

JB: The movie which stands out in my mind was the one where Chuck Norris seemed to be teaching a lesson. It had the angles of attack and other demonstrations—more so than in the other movies . . .

TT: I think so.

JB: You never really studied under him, but you were involved at the same time he was doing the movies. Were the movies that important to him?

TT: Yes, I think so.

JB: Do you think he would ever have been an instructor of kung-fu?

TT: No. He didn't like to teach—not large groups. He liked to work out, from what I understand. Dan did a lot of his teaching. Bruce really didn't have time.



Figure 19. A jeet kune do/kali seminar held by the author at Radford University, featuring Larry Hartsell and Dick Harrell, 1984.

JB: Where do you think JKD would be if Bruce was still alive?

TT: I've thought about that a lot and I think there would be twelve guys in Dan's backyard. I think it would have been kept small—to a select group. It would have spread, but it would have been an underground spread. Everybody in it for a long time might have four or five students somewhere and then, in a few years, they would each have some students, and so on.

JB: What do you say to people who say that JKD died with Bruce Lee?

TT: I think that's foolishness. How can a concept die? A man can die, but a concept cannot. He was a genius at coming up with and relating things. He created an awful lot of great drills, great ideas, training methods—studying all kinds of different ways. What are the attributes, the qualities, that a good martial artist needs? You go to the experts and find out what they say. And you explore. You have a concept

of efficiency. That's the idea of jeet kune do. It's not some teacher telling you how to do it. Bruce's ultimate objective was to get the student away from the teacher so that the student doesn't rely on that teacher. It's like that old fish story. If I come to you every day—and you are my teacher—and you give me a fish, I become very dependent on getting a fish from you. But if you teach me how to fish, I no longer have to be dependent. I can go catch my own fish. Most martial arts instructors make the student dependent on them. Bruce tried to teach them how to fish. So if you have that concept, his death just forces us to go fishing—a lot sooner than we wanted to. I'd rather be dependent on Bruce, but we were forced to go on. Because of him, we were able to do that. Here's the important thing—A martial arts teacher comes along and creates a style, and anybody who has created a style has done what Bruce did, and that's to take from different areas. So that teacher dies after the style has grown some. His students then make a law out of what he taught and there's nothing more. There's nothing else but what he taught. Now, he hadn't done this, but the students have after generations. But now, the sensei may have actually been working on something else when he died. Now, most martial arts are taught this way. We weren't—and that makes the difference. If what we're doing now was what Bruce was doing when he died—that would be it. We would just be doing what he did at that particular time. We're probably doing things that Bruce would be doing now, because we're exploring. Pentjak has a lot of neat things. And you can use wing chun with the pentjak . . .

JB: It follows the same concepts that he had?

TT: Yes. You can take a martial art that does have certain things in it—power, efficiency, speed—but lacks other things. I can use wing chun and use an aikido lock to make a particular technique work. That's JKD.

JB: So it's that continual flow . . .

TT: It's a continual flow and sometimes you don't know what to call a technique. Was it wing chun? Was it pentjak? Was it Thai boxing? And to get over the concept of certain things—like the black belt—and be able to fight somebody who may be 260 pounds and doesn't give a damn about your black belt. He's going to run over 99 percent of the



Figure 20. Indonesian silat is now part of physical jeet kune do. Pictured in front row center is Pendekar Paul de Thouars (with hat) and brother Victor.

black belts in America because he doesn't care. He's been hit so many times that he's just going to bite your nose off and take you down. That's the kind of opponent you have to deal with, not with some guy dancing around in a ring. And that's what you have to be able to train for. It's survival.

JB: Is there anything else you'd like to mention? What about the future?

TT: Hopefully, it won't die out. Hopefully it won't get watered down.

JB: If the principal instructors—yourself, Dan, and Larry—were not here, do you think JKD would continue?

TT: I feel really good about the next generation. I just hope it doesn't happen too soon because I don't think they've learned enough yet. There are some who are very good and there are some who have a lot to offer who don't even teach.

JB: Is there a particular art that a person might want to start with?



Figure 21. The author with jeet kune do leader Dan Inosanto.

TT: I can tell you what Bruce recommended. At a young age, have a kid take judo. It's very controlled. He's learning throwing. He's learning body mechanics. And then at about fourteen, put him into Western boxing. That's a good combination to have and to add to. And always know that there's no one way, and that you must have an inquiring mind. None of the jeet kune do guys accept anything just because somebody says this is the way to do it—none of us, even if Bruce said it.

First of all, I will say that it's very, very painful to have studied a martial art and be a black belt and to be respected as somewhat of an expert in the field, and to come out and start working in something which you know nothing about. You can take a guy who knows nothing, bring him in along with a second degree black belt and train them in jeet kune do, and the guy who knows nothing may do much better. He doesn't have any habits that might hold him back. Not that the karate guy would be wrong, but what he knows would be different from the concepts we teach. When I started taking it a lot of guys said it was no good—because it was threatening to their egos. That happens in seminars. You take black belts and do boxing drills, and all of a sudden they're getting hit. Or they'll come to my house and rarely do they want to learn more. Most of them don't ever come back.

JB: Continually, people have mentioned the boxing. Perhaps with the empty hand, the boxing sets a person free and with weapons, the kali sets the person free . . .

TT: That's a good analogy. The kali, I think, is much more sophisticated than the boxing. There's a lot more to it. It's much faster. But the boxing definitely has a lot of value. You don't see anyone doing a high block and a reverse punch in the ring. Why? Because it doesn't work in reality. It worked within the framework of karate versus karate. That was one of the problems. You trained only within the confines of the system.

JB: How about a person who may have some martial arts training, then heard of JKD, and wants to experience it on his own?

TT: We get calls and letters all the time and people write to the magazines claiming that what Bruce was really saying

was that you can create your own style. Well, maybe, if you're Bruce. But these guys aren't like Bruce. And when I run into some of these guys who have read *The Tao of Jeet Kune Do* and have seen the movies and have used the concept, they just don't have it. It requires a guide, a pointer, to the truth. It takes somebody who knows it. You can experiment on your own, but it won't be JKD, unless you're Bruce. A guy like Bruce comes along once in a generation.



Figure 22. Jeet kune do next generation instructors. Top row: Jearl Sutherland, Ann and Vic Payne. Bottom row: Bruce Jolly, Dick Harrell, Rob Kelley.

Readers of martial arts journals will undoubtedly recognize many second-generation JKD instructors in addition to Tim Tackett. Through written articles and appearances on covers or within the pages, some of these instructors have become well known. Included in this second generation are Jeff Imada, Chris Kent, Ted Lucaylucay, Cass Magda, Alfonso Tamez, Saleem Assli, Dick Harrell, Fran Joseph, Cliff Lenderman, Blaise Loong, and Paul Vunak. Among these instructors, Paul Vunak has emerged as perhaps the most identifiable of the next generation, having appeared in numerous articles and on covers, and having completed a popular series of videotapes demonstrating the skills of kali and the concepts of JKD.

Chapter 4

The Skills of Jeet Kune Do

There is a commonly shared belief that Bruce Lee included skills, concepts, and belief systems from twenty-six arts to form the physical and mental characteristics of interpretation of JKD-influenced martial arts. In Chapter 4 we will briefly examine interpretations of a few of these styles. It should be noted that it is indeed difficult to photograph a physical skill. In each case, the reader may not be able to appreciate the explosive quality and speed associated with the expert performance of the martial art.

FIVE WAYS OF ATTACK

Dan Inosanto squares off with student Bruce Jolly to demonstrate attack by drawing (ABD). In this sequence, Dan exposes his midsection to draw in Bruce's kick (Figure 26) and counters with a leg kick or destruction technique to immobilize his opponent's leg.

Dan demonstrates attack by combination (ABC), by setting up his opponent with a jab (Figure 29), cross combination (Figure 30), and moves in for a finishing technique (Figure 31).



Figure 23.



Figure 24.

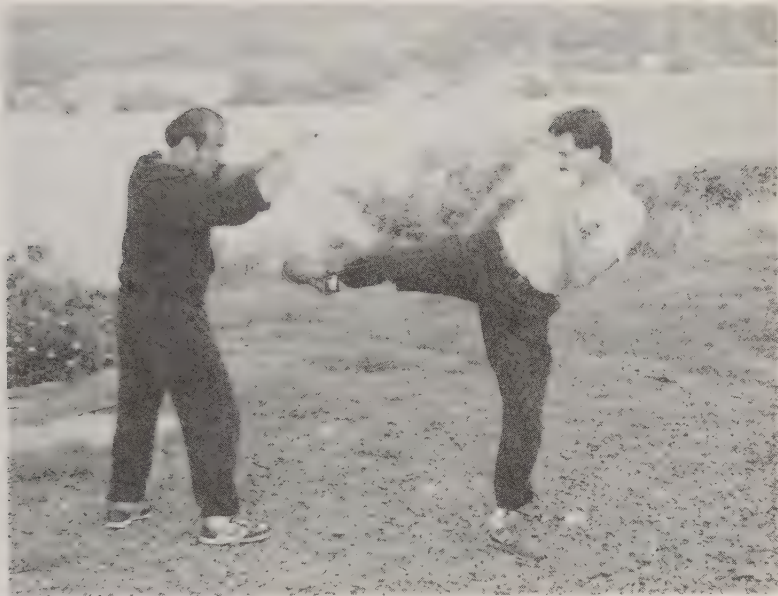


Figure 25.

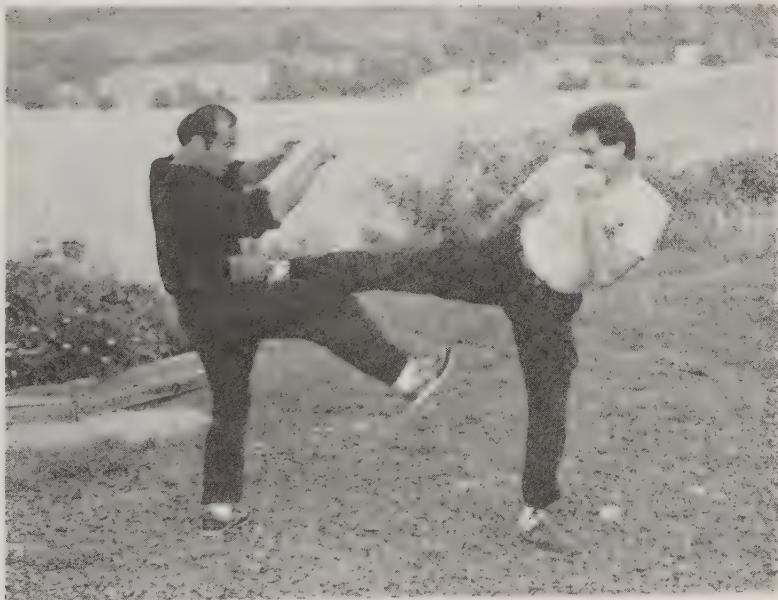
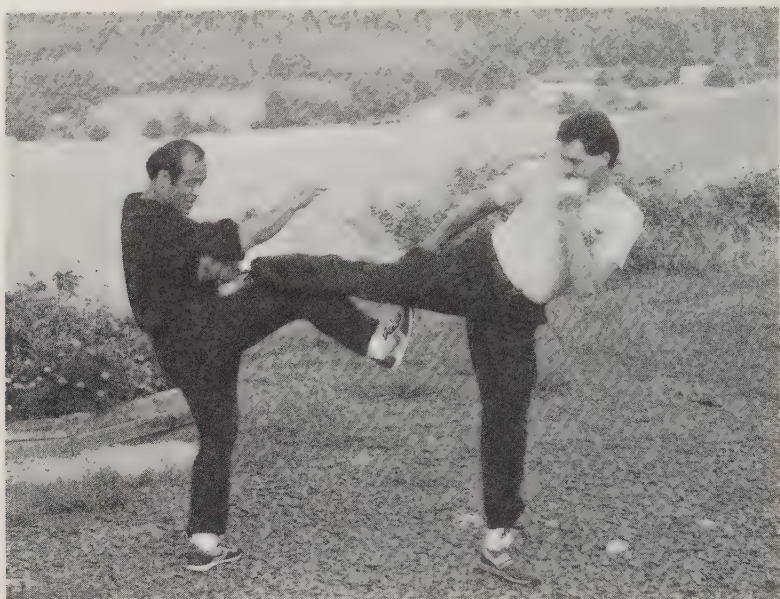


Figure 26.

**Figure 27.**

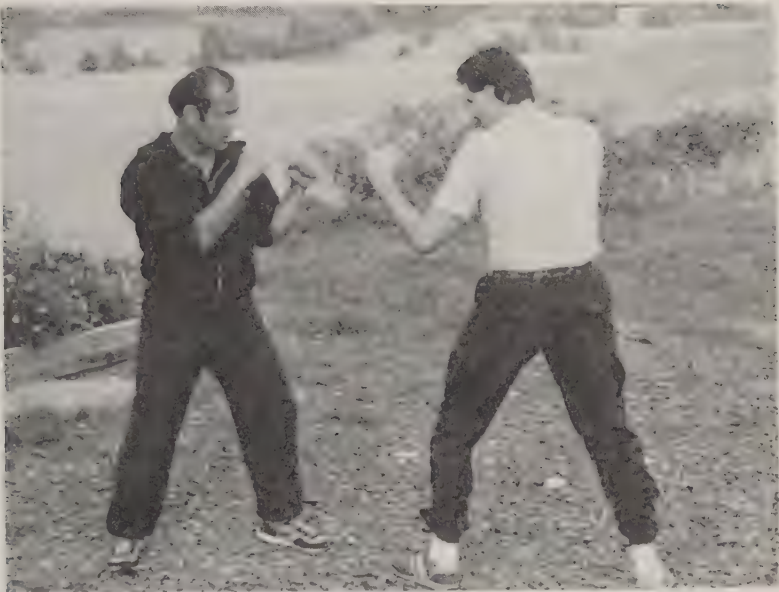


Figure 28.



Figure 29.



Figure 30.



Figure 31.

In this sequence Dan and Bruce demonstrate the concept of single angulated attack (SAA). While the intended target is the throat, two other points are attacked as a deceptive measure in order to set up the third strike to the throat.



Figure 32.



Figure 33.



Figure 34.



Figure 35.

A second view of SAA. In this case, a high target diversion is attempted to disguise the intent of striking the stomach (Figure 39).



Figure 36.

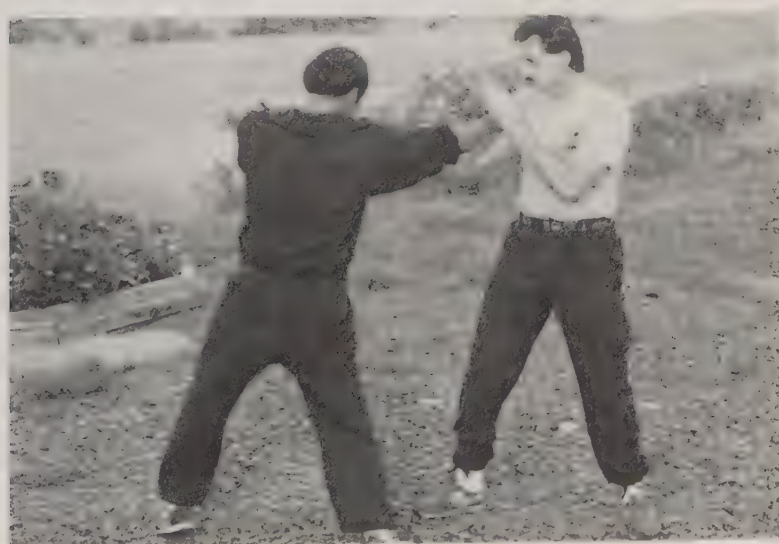


Figure 37.

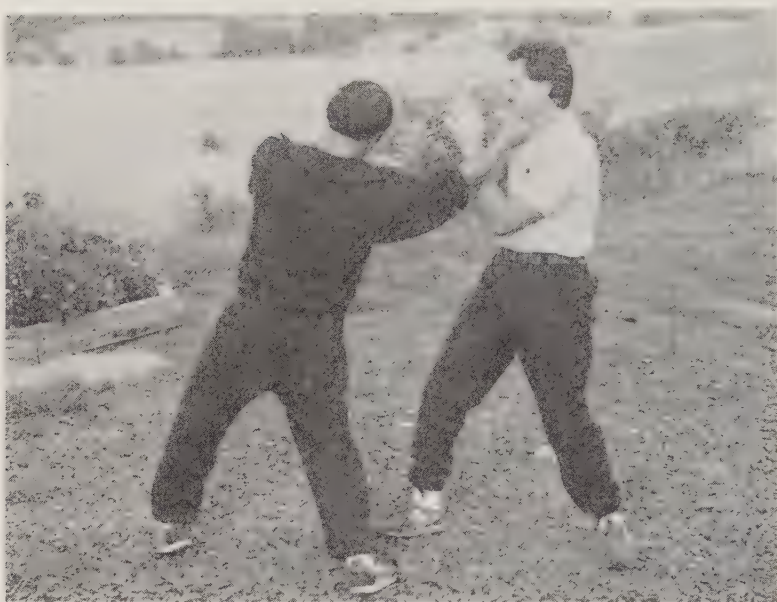


Figure 38.



Figure 39.

In this sequence Dan demonstrates a progressive indirect attack (PIA) in which the emphasis is to take up distance (progressive) and time (indirect). Again, using the lead-hand strike, Dan uses distance and time to, in effect, overwhelm his opponent. Note: Although the same lead hand techniques are employed for each method, it is the method of delivery that is the important factor in these brief demonstrations of SAA and PIA.



Figure 40.

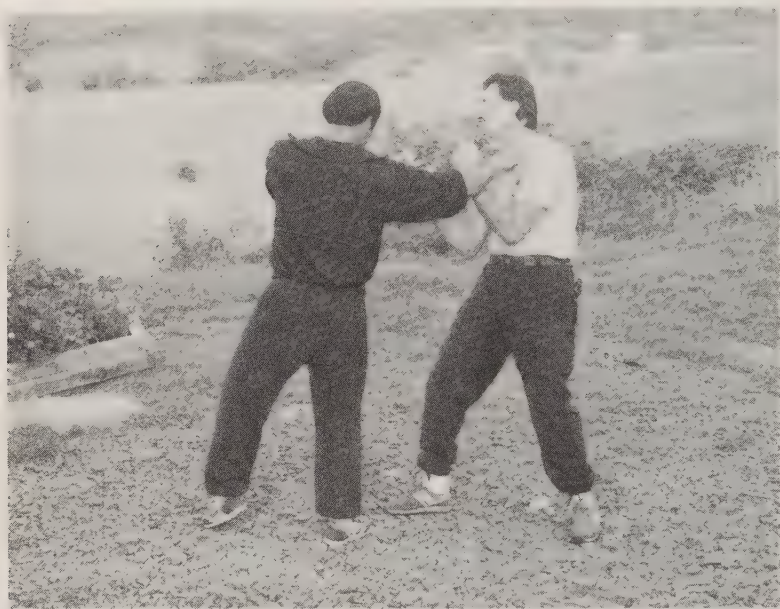


Figure 41.

Hand immobilization attack (HIA) is often identified with Bruce Lee's interpretation of physical JKD. In this sequence Dan traps his opponent's lead (Figure 43) and back hands (Figure 44). Moving in, Dan follows with two strikes (Figures 45, 46).



Figure 42.

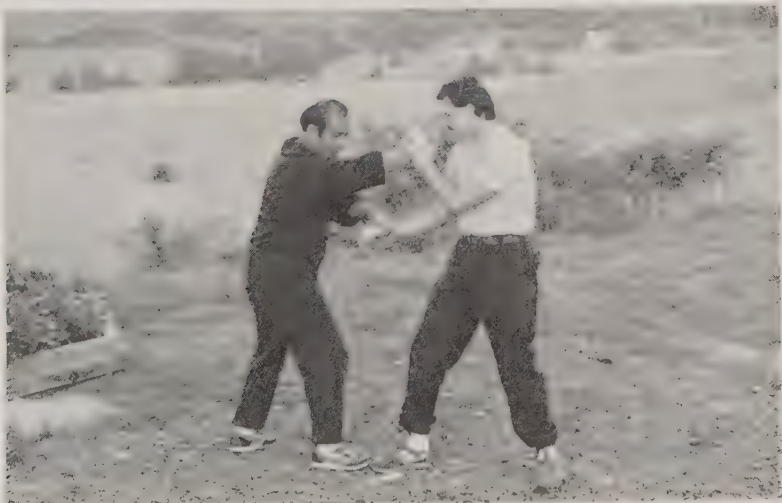


Figure 43.



Figure 44.



Figure 45.



Figure 46.

Immobilization as a form of attack can also be applied to the legs. In this sequence Dan emphasizes the trapping of the lead leg to control his opponent (Figures 47, 48).



Figure 47.



Figure 48.

GRAPPLING

In this series, Larry Hartsell demonstrates skills of grappling with partner Steve Aqajanian.

Larry squares off with Steve (Figure 49), parries Steve's jab (Figure 50), and redirects Steve's right cross with a forearm deflection (Figure 51) followed by an elbow strike (Figure 52). At this point, Larry enters a second sequence which is continued from the first series. By controlling his opponent's arm (Figure 53), Larry begins an arm bar (Figures 54, 55) and inflicts pain first to the upper arm (Figure 56) and then to the wrist and lower arm (Figure 57). Note that Larry's footwork allows him to zone away from his opponent's power side.

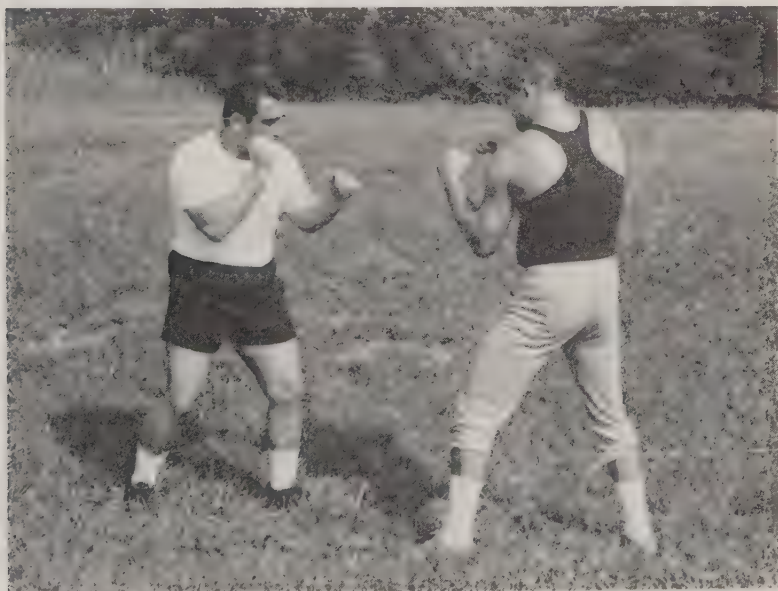


Figure 49.



Figure 50.



Figure 51.



Figure 52.



Figure 53.



Figure 54.



Figure 55.



Figure 56.



Figure 57.

In this sequence Larry enters his opponent's area with a pak sao (Figure 58), lap sao (Figures 59, 60), and follows with a right to the face (Figure 61) and left to the face (Figure 62). As a finishing hold, Larry then applies an arm bar (Figures 63, 64).



Figure 58.



Figure 59.



Figure 60.



Figure 61.



Figure 62.



Figure 63.



Figure 64.

Grappling methods often are preceded by entering methods. Here, Larry enters with redirectional and immobilization techniques (Figures 65–67) and controls the neck (Figure 68). By twisting the arm and off-balancing his opponent (Figure 69), Larry takes his opponent to the ground (Figure 70) and applies a combination arm and neck control finishing technique (Figure 71). Hartsell's grappling method is very effective. A key concept in grappling requires a continuous flow of pain-inducing and off-balancing techniques.



Figure 65.



Figure 66.



Figure 67.



Figure 68.



Figure 69.



Figure 70.



Figure 71.

ALTERING STYLES

Almost any martial art has techniques that can be used as vehicles to demonstrate the principles of JKD. In this series Joe Lewis and author Jerry Beasley demonstrate JKD principles through nonclassical karate and boxing techniques. (Photos by Jack Jeffers.)

Lewis demonstrates the principle of direct attack with a classical karate-style lunge punch (Figures 72, 73). In Figures 74 and 75, Lewis demonstrates the same principle using a boxing-oriented method.

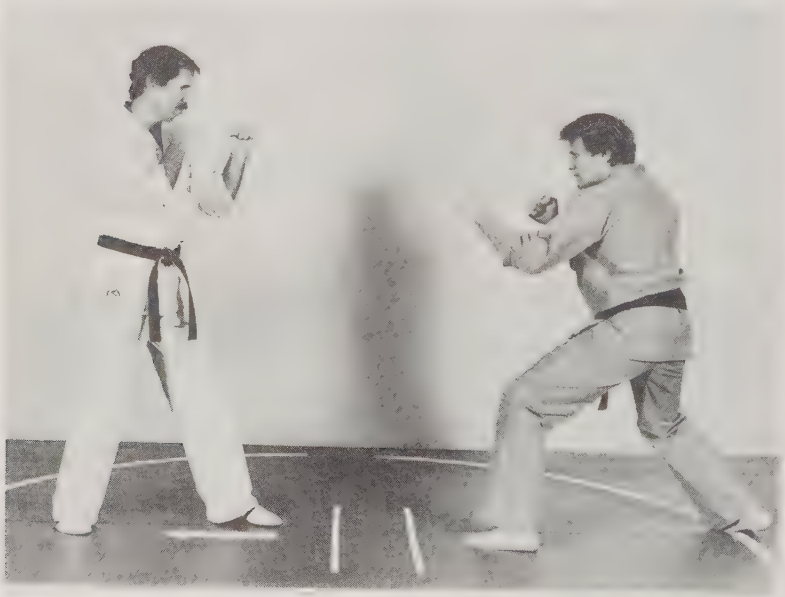


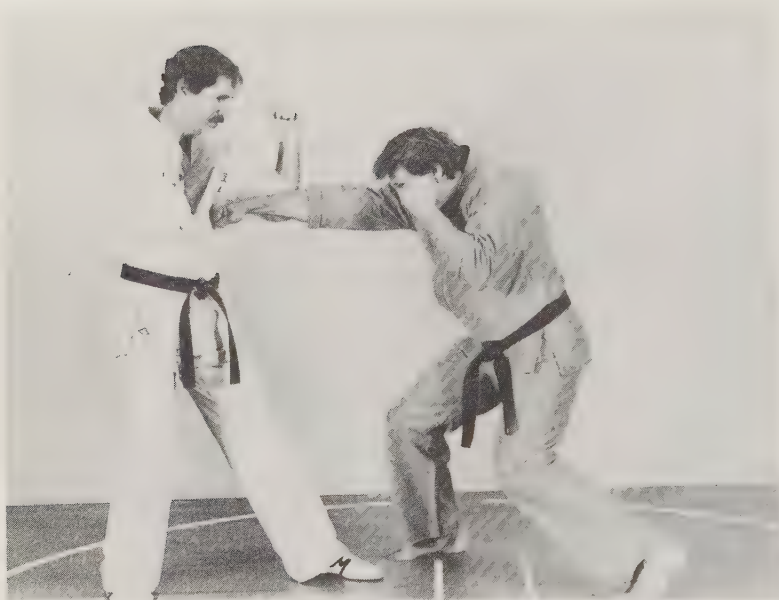
Figure 72.



Figure 73.



Figure 74.

**Figure 75.**

Indirect attack can be facilitated by the use of a body fake. In this sequence, Lewis fakes a step and draws Beasley's side kick (Figure 78), which sets up Lewis' punch (Figure 79). In Figures 80 and 81, Lewis demonstrates the body positioning he used to draw the attack and counter.



Figure 76.



Figure 77.



Figure 78.

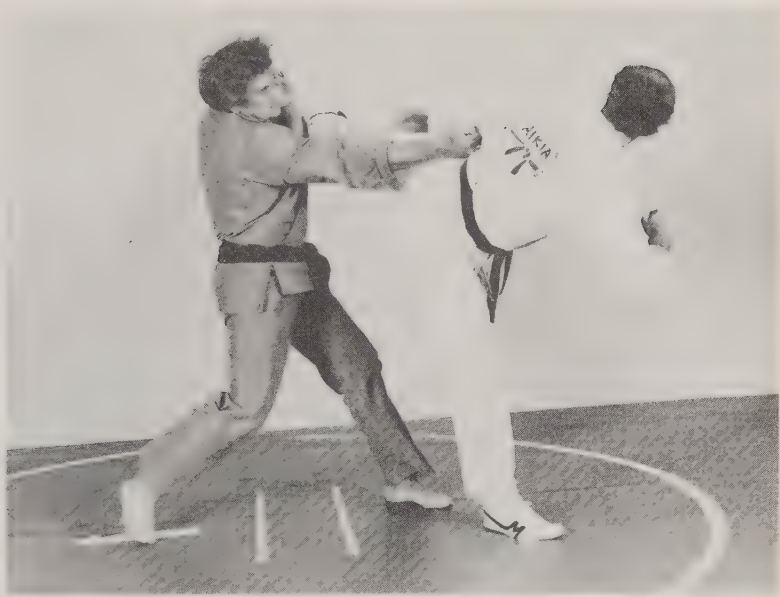


Figure 79.



Figure 80.



Figure 81.

Once again, Lewis demonstrates how the JKD principle of attack by combination can be used in either classical-style karate (Figures 82–85; note the hand by the hip), or in a more modern karate system employing the JKD concept of economy of motion (Figures 86–90).



Figure 82.



Figure 83.



Figure 84.



Figure 85.



Figure 86.



Figure 87.



Figure 88.



Figure 89.



Figure 90.

ALTERING METHODS

Bruce Lee felt that the stop hit, or way of intercepting a fist, was a very high order of combat. He thus named his interpretation of the methods of combat JKD “the way of the intercepting fist.” In this series, Tim Tackett demonstrates the concept.

Figures 91 and 92 demonstrate the standard method of blocking, then punching. A higher form of combat would entail combining the block with the punch in one movement (Figures 93–95). A still higher form of combat—the level Bruce attempted to achieve—would seek to intercept the attack. By negating the need for the block and by using economy of motion, Tim, in effect, intercepts the attack (Figures 96–99).



Figure 91.



Figure 92.



Figure 93.



Figure 94.



Figure 95.



Figure 96.



Figure 97.



Figure 98.



Figure 99.

In Figures 100 to 104, Tackett intercepts the punch with a kick (Figure 101), then immobilizes the opponent's arms (Figures 102, 103) and prepares to counter (Figure 104).



Figure 100.



Figure 101.



Figure 102.



Figure 103.



Figure 104.

Wing Chun

Francis Fong, a highly regarded Atlanta, Georgia, wing chun and kali instructor, demonstrates typical wing chun defenses.

Francis and Morgan demonstrate the economy of motion associated with wing chun as Francis redirects the punch and strike (Figures 105-107).

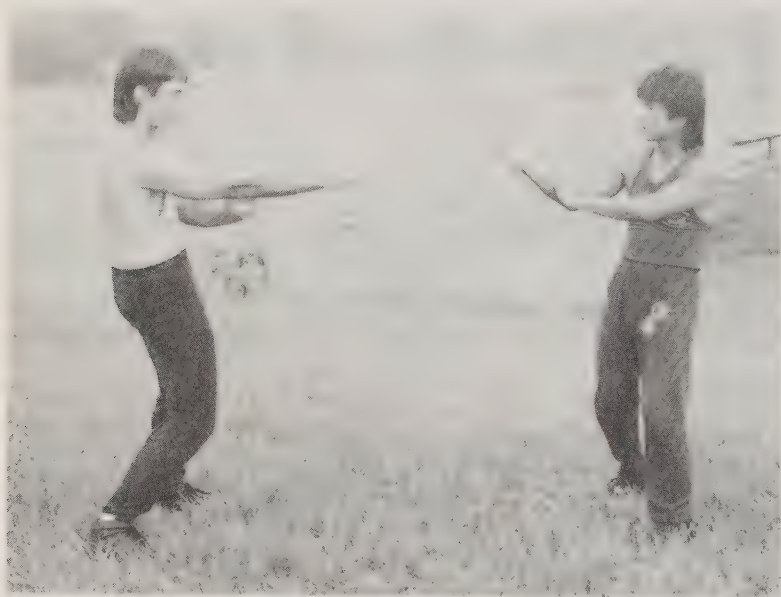


Figure 105.



Figure 106.



Figure 107.

In this sequence, Francis controls the elbow and follows into a strike and trap combination (Figures 108–111).



Figure 108.



Figure 109.



Figure 110.



Figure 111.

The foot and knee are used equally in the wing chun system (Figures 112–116). The art of wing chun became Bruce Lee's primary method for constructing the concepts of JKD.



Figure 112.



Figure 113.



Figure 114.



Figure 115.



Figure 116.

Boxing

Fred Degerberg is owner and founder of the world-famous Degerberg Academy in Chicago, Illinois. Degerberg earned his black belt in the 1960s and began incorporating boxing to better his system. Today, the Degerberg Academy offers classes in martial arts from places such as China, Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and France.

Bruce Lee had much respect for the utility of boxing. Over one-third of his book, *The Tao of Jeet Kune Do*, is devoted to boxing methods and terminology.

Degerberg's boxing method is simple and direct. Sensing an opening, Degerberg leads with a left hook to the body (Figure 119) and follows immediately with a right hook (Figure 120), which may include an elbow follow-through (Figure 121), and completes the sequence with a left hook (Figure 123).



Figure 117.



Figure 118.



Figure 119.

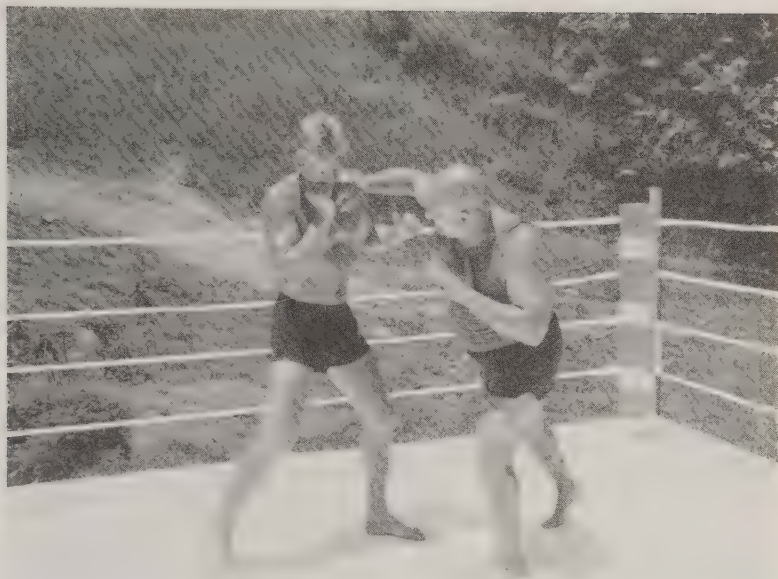


Figure 120.



Figure 121.



Figure 122.



Figure 123.

Self-Defense

Graciela Casillas earned the title of world karate champion and is the founder of The Anti-Assault System (TAAS). A champion boxer as well, she is one of the greatest female fighters in the world. In this series, she demonstrates to partner Cliff Stewart how she could respond to attacks from the front and from behind.

Against a frontal grab, Grace deflects the grab and strikes to the soft tissue of the neck (Figure 126), then follows with a knee to the groin (Figures 127-128).



Figure 124.



Figure 125.



Figure 126.



Figure 127.



Figure 128.

Against an intended bear hug, Grace strikes low, then high, then quickly spins around to finish the defense (Figures 129-132).



Figure 129.



Figure 130.



Figure 131.



Figure 132.

Ninjutsu

Cliff Lenderman, of Tacoma, Washington, is an associate instructor of JKD concepts and has teaching credentials in Thai boxing, taekwon do, and togakure-ryu ninjutsu. Lenderman was the first individual to integrate the ninjutsu combative and stealth methods with the concepts of JKD. In the following sequences, Cliff combines principles of kali and togakure-ryu to defend against a knife attack.

Cliff demonstrates a kali-oriented defense by quickly deflecting and redirecting the blade (Figures 133–137).



Figure 133.



Figure 134.



Figure 135.



Figure 136.



Figure 137.

In Figures 138-143, Cliff demonstrates how he has integrated the ninjutsu principles by using the fist (Figure 139) to strike the nerves of the wrist; after controlling the blade, he drives his body weight into his opponent (Figures 142, 143).



Figure 138.



Figure 139.



Figure 140.



Figure 141.



Figure 142.

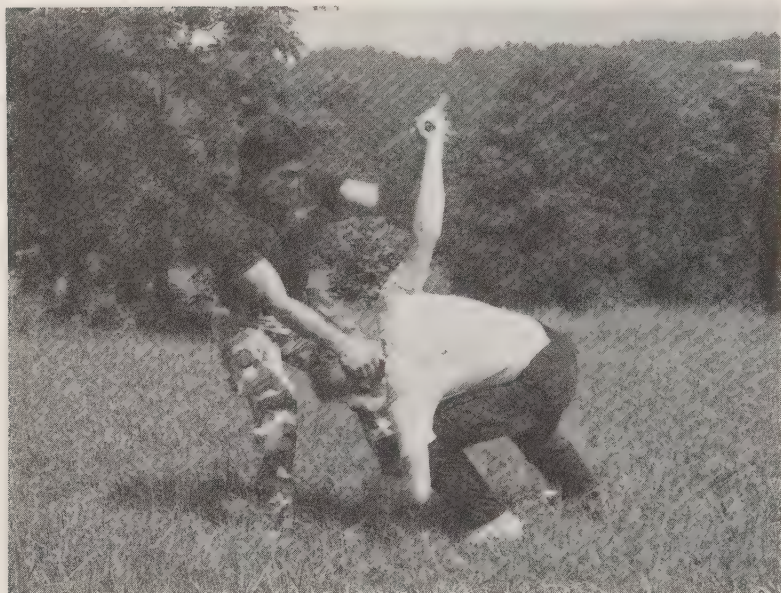


Figure 143.

Against a rear choke, Cliff again draws from ninjutsu-style techniques to control the knife (Figure 146) and uses his body weight (Figure 148) to defeat his opponent.



Figure 144.



Figure 145.



Figure 146.



Figure 147.



Figure 148.



Figure 149.

Kali

The Filipino martial art of kali is a central theme in modern JKD practice. Kali as an art contains techniques for kicking, boxing, trapping, grappling, and weapons, making it an excellent vehicle for the interpretation of JKD concepts. Dick Harrell is an associate JKD instructor and is head of the original JKD academy in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dick demonstrates a sequence flow to be used against a knife attack by attacking the limb (“defanging the serpent,” in kali terminology; Figures 150–151) and counterstriking. As his opponent, Rob Kelley, attempts a counter (Figure 152), Dick again slashes the wrist and completes multiple thrusts before finishing with a knee strike. The entire sequence takes only a few seconds.

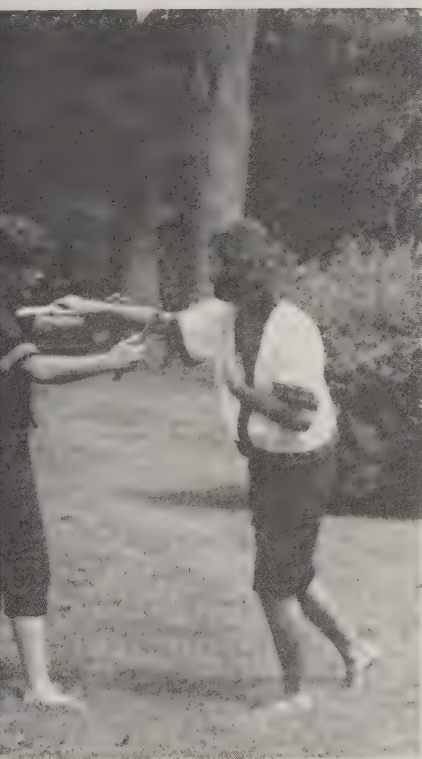


Figure 150.



Figure 151.



Figure 152.

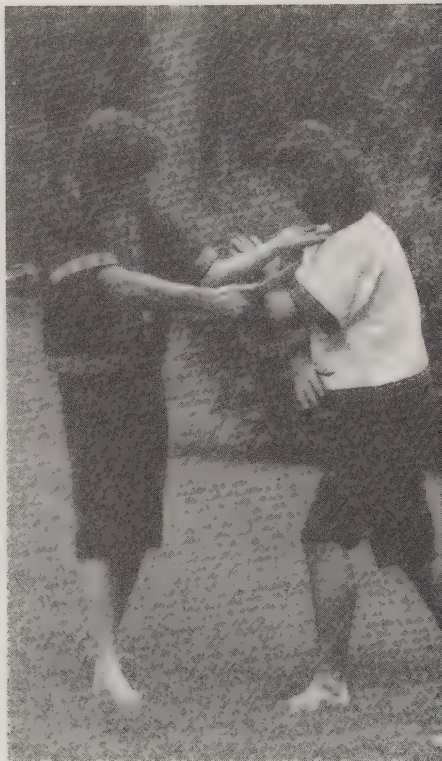


Figure 153.



Figure 154.



Figure 155.

Demonstrating how kali can be used in virtually the same form with weapons or empty hand (Figures 156-162), Dick demonstrates a similar defense by first destructing the arm (Figure 157), and then countering each attack before finishing with the same knee strike.



Figure 156.



Figure 157.



Figure 158.

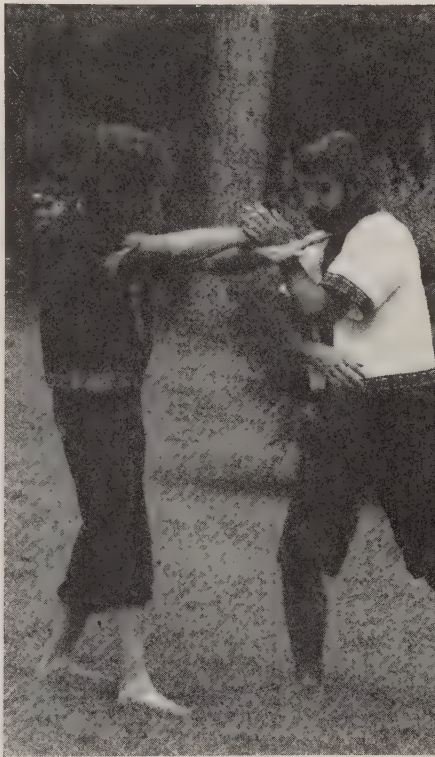


Figure 159.



Figure 160.

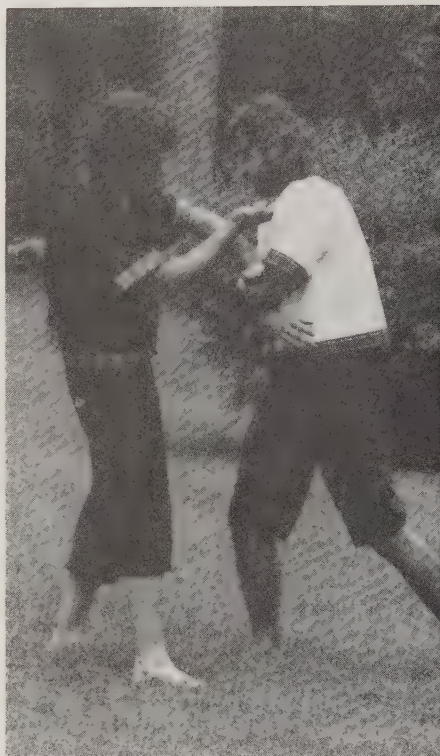


Figure 161.

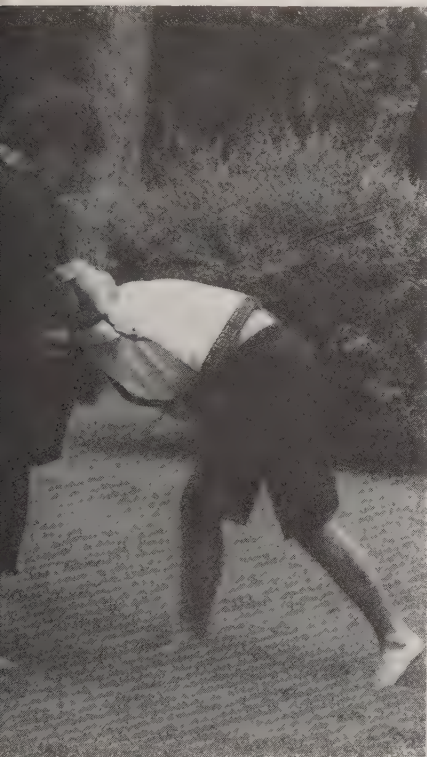


Figure 162.

The stick is perhaps the most often used weapon in kali. In the following sequence, Dick Harrell demonstrates a typical escrima or stick-fighting defense, which includes a deflection (Figure 163) and removal of the opponent's weapon (Figure 164), followed by multiple strikes and a choke out (Figure 167) finishing hold.

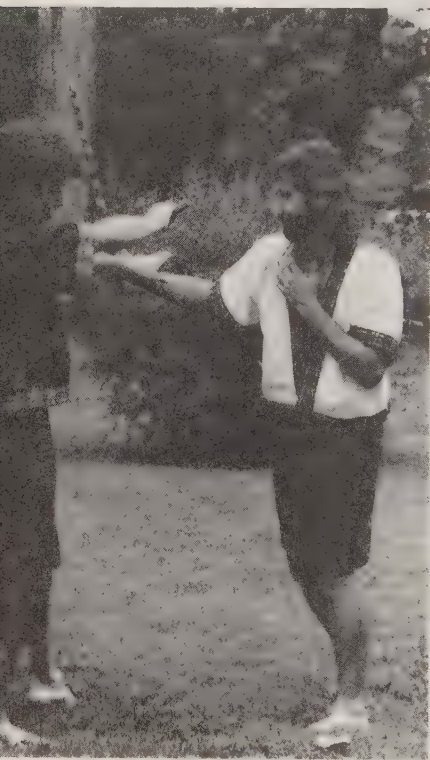


Figure 163.



Figure 164.

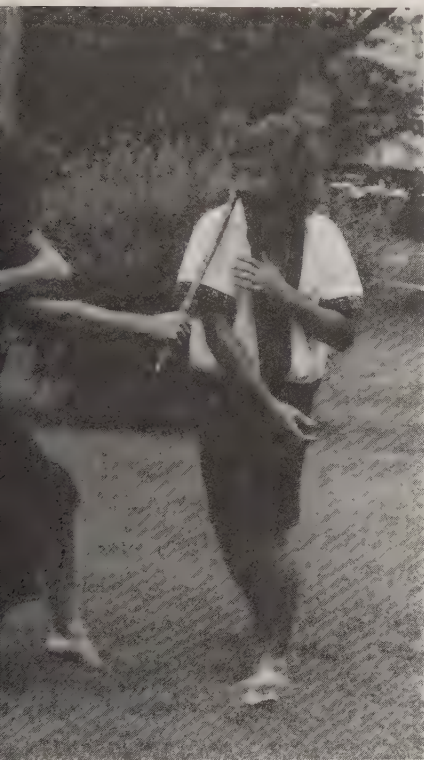


Figure 165.



Figure 166.

**Figure 167.**

Once again, the compatibility of kali's concepts in empty hand and weapon defense are demonstrated (Figures 168-173). Dick first destructs the limb with an elbow strike (Figure 168) and follows the typical kali flow pattern to engage multiple strikes before completing the sequence with the choke out (Figure 173).



Figure 168.



Figure 169.



Figure 170.



Figure 171.

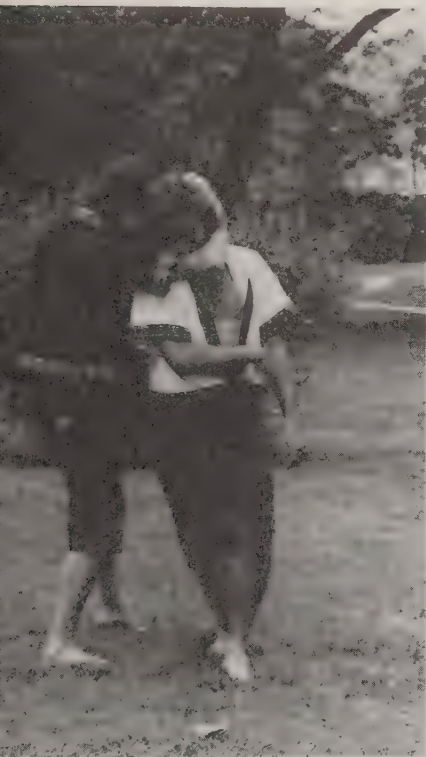


Figure 172.



Figure 173.

In Figures 174–178, Larry Lindenman and his student Ron Balicki demonstrate empty hand kali. Larry first traps (Figure 175) and follows with an eye strike and knee before finishing with a takedown (Figure 178). (Photos and models courtesy of the Degerberg Academy, Chicago, Illinois.)



Figure 174.



Figure 175.



Figure 176.



Figure 177.



Figure 178.

Against the kick, Larry captures the leg (Figure 182) and uses a grappling lock (Figure 183).



Figure 179.



Figure 180.



Figure 181.



Figure 182.

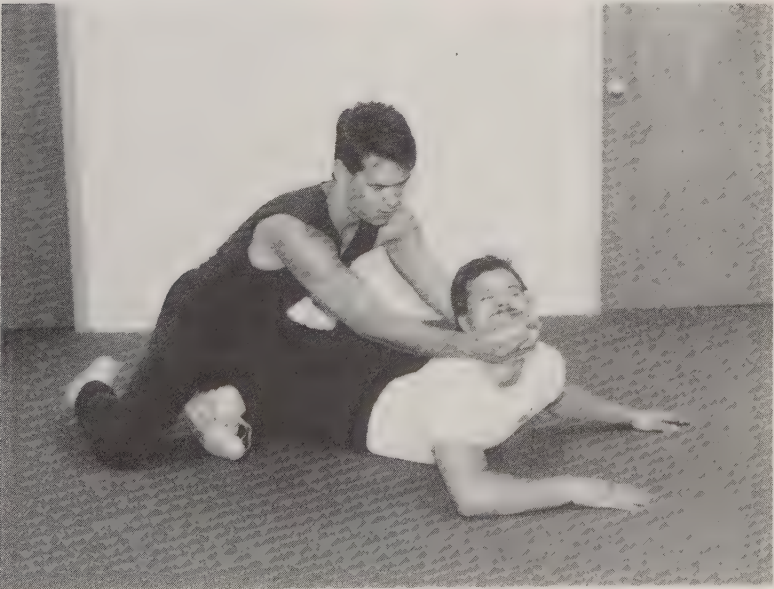


Figure 183.

Thai Boxing

Modern JKD students focus on kali and muay thai. In this series, Chatchai Kaewbaidhoon and Buddhai Sawan demonstrate Thai boxing fundamentals. (Photos and models courtesy of the Degerberg Academy, Chicago, Illinois.)

Chai demonstrates possible counters to a round kick by deflection (Figure 186) with a counter kick (Figure 187) or round kick delivered to the opponent's support leg (Figure 189). Although many martial artists associate Thai boxing with devastating kicks, muay thai includes numerous upper body skills.

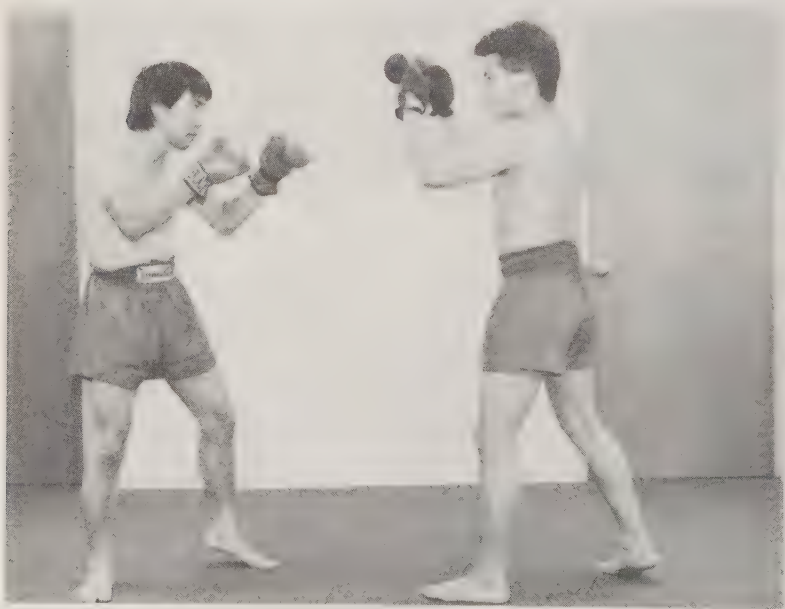


Figure 184.

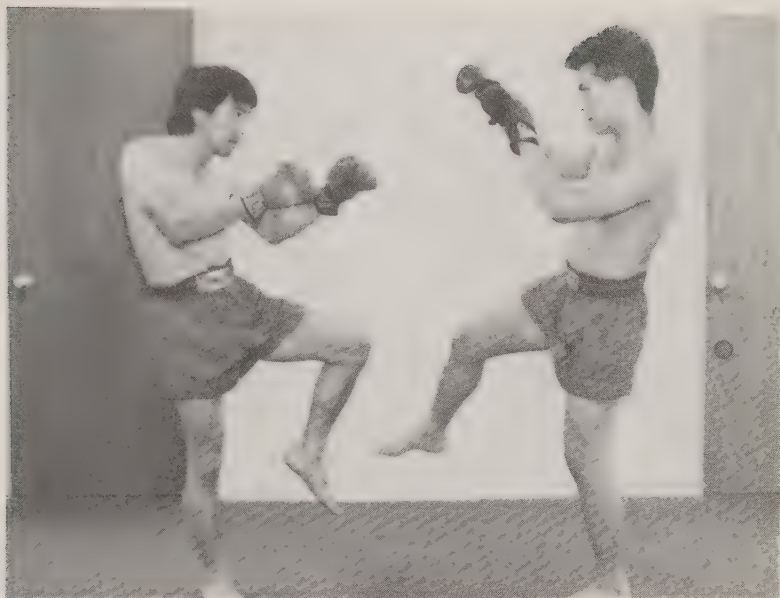


Figure 185.



Figure 186.

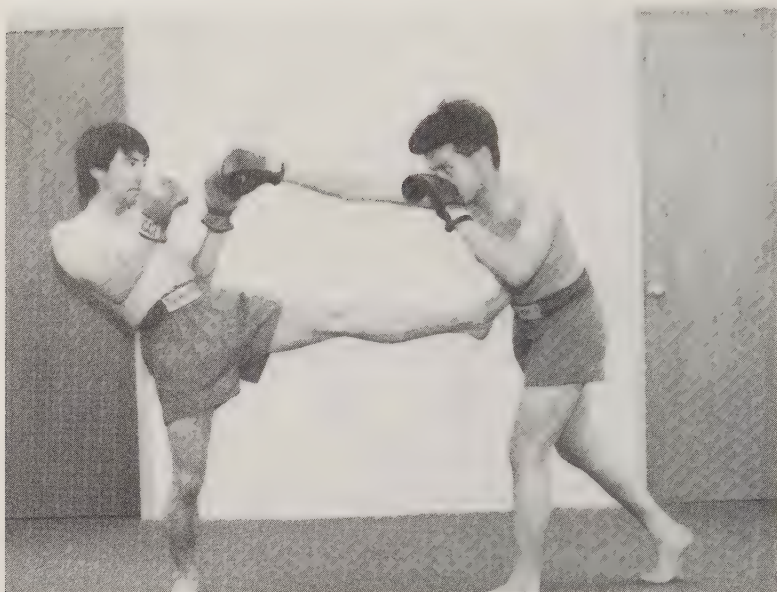


Figure 187.

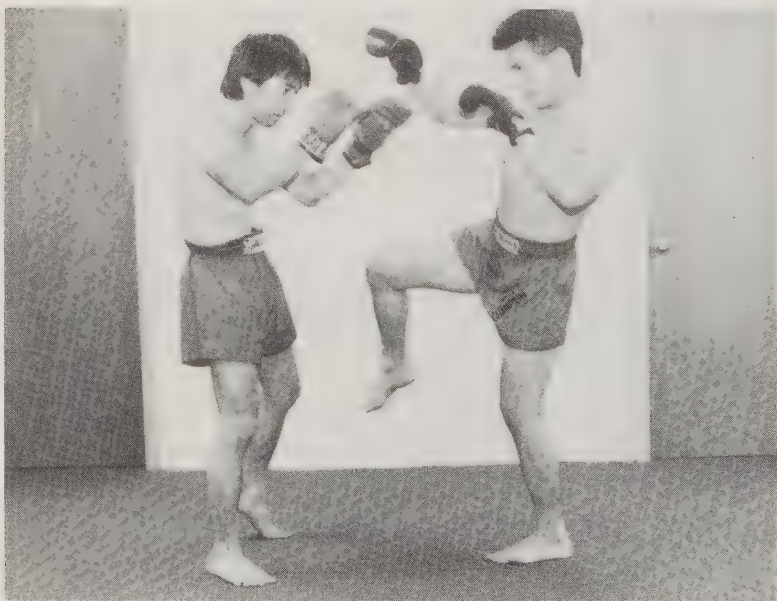


Figure 188.

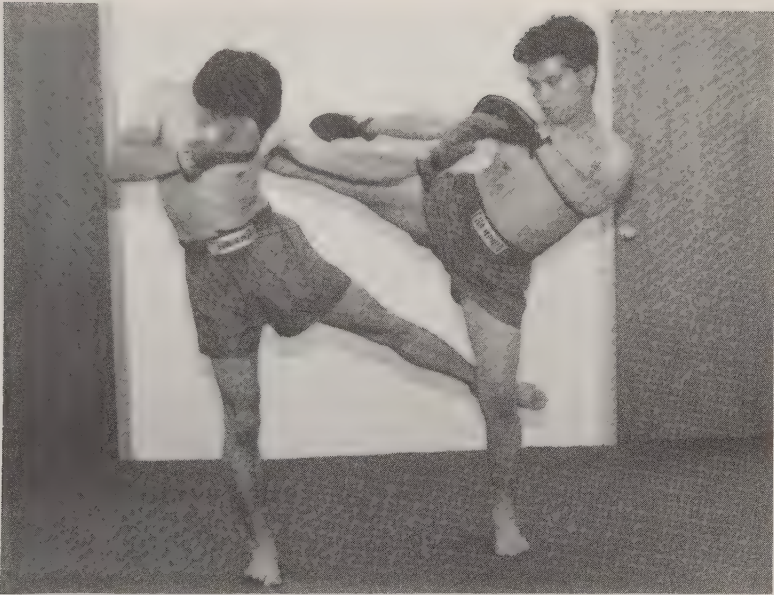


Figure 189.

Chai demonstrates a deflection (Figure 191), which sets up a knee (Figure 192) and counter elbow strike (Figure 194).



Figure 190.

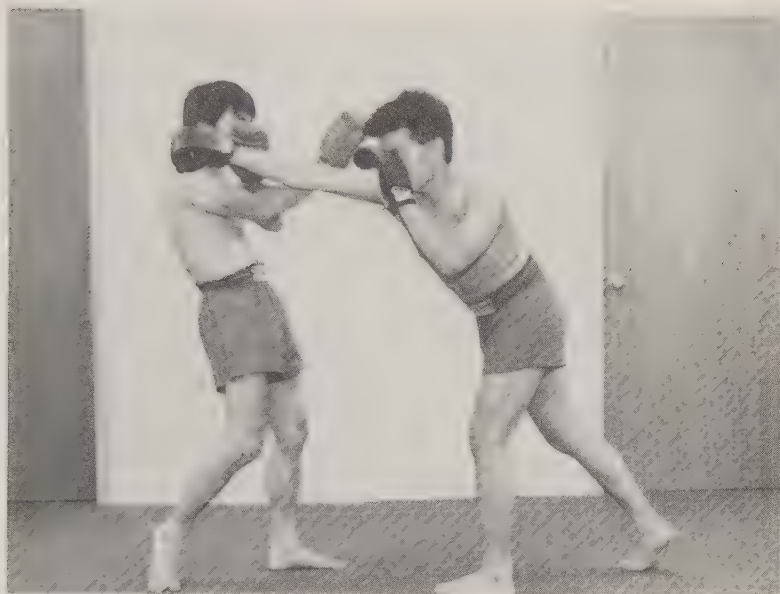


Figure 191.



Figure 192.



Figure 193.

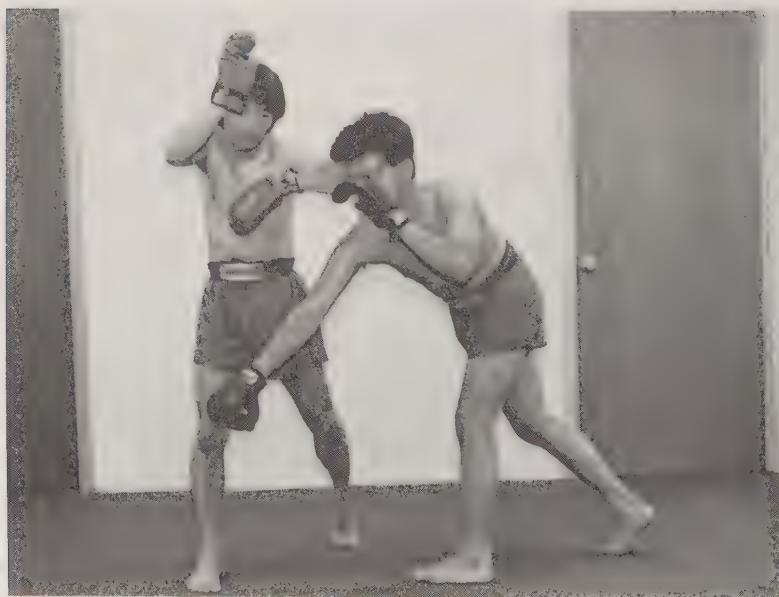


Figure 194.

Savate

Savate often is identified as the French art of fighting with the shoe or foot. Only recently has the art become popular in the United States, largely thanks to the interest shown by JKD enthusiasts. (Photos and models courtesy of the Degerberg Academy, Chicago, Illinois.)

Gerry Bedka and John Brauc are both ranked savate practitioners. As John attempts a right cross (Figure 196), Gerry counters with a combination that ends with a shoe kick (*fuate*) to the body (Figure 198).



Figure 195.

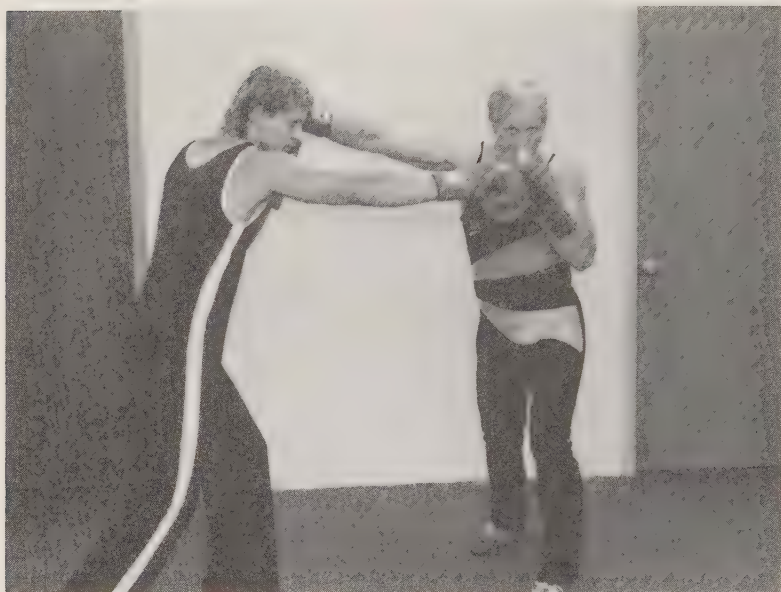


Figure 196.



Figure 197.



Figure 198.

In Figures 199 to 202, John demonstrates a counter hook kick (rovar) (Figure 202). In the final sequence (Figures 203-206), Gerry returns a round (fuete) kick of his own (Figure 206).



Figure 199.



Figure 200.



Figure 201.



Figure 202.



Figure 203.



Figure 204.



Figure 205.



Figure 206.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

In book seven, part seven of Plato's *The Republic*, Socrates provides an analogy of a cave dweller's recognition of reality that effectively describes Bruce Lee's difficulty in spreading the theory of jeet kune do. In the "myth of the cave," Socrates describes captive men who are chained to a wall deep within a darkened cave. The men sit facing a far wall. Their necks are bound such that they can only look in one direction.

Behind them, near the entrance to the cave, is a large fire. Also behind them, but in front of the fire, is a raised walkway or platform on which other men transport statues of animals and men made from wood and stone. As the men pass between the fire and the prisoners, shadows of the statues are cast on the far wall making it appear to the prisoners chained below that the shadows or images are real.

The shadows represent their only source of knowledge. Even though the prisoners cannot see each other, they give names to the shadows of images they see on the wall. As the men who carry the statues speak to one another, the prisoners mistakenly identify their echoing sounds to be sounds made by the reflected images. The talking shadows become the only reality known to the prisoners. As a result, the prisoners develop a chain of command of sorts that

honors those prisoners who best describe the shadows or who can more effectively tell one shadow from another.

Now let's suppose, says Socrates, that one of the prisoners is suddenly liberated. For one reason or another, he manages to break free from his physical restraints and is able to stand up and look around into the light. Of course, the sudden glare will cause him much pain. And as he looks back to the wall, he is temporarily blinded and is no longer enticed by the security of the shadows. Without seeing the "realities" of the shadows, his only source of knowledge, he is unable to function and stumbles upward toward the mouth of the cave. As he travels toward the entrance, he is able to see real objects—the statues and the fire. But having known only shadows, he rejects the real images as he tries to find other shadows.

Socrates maintains that the newly liberated man must be dragged up to the daylight. Here, he is almost blinded, having previously seen only in the darkness. As his eyes begin to adjust to the sunlight, he sees shadows and reflections of real things and rushes to the shadows. As he becomes more accustomed to the light, he realizes that the shadows are actually only reflections of what is real. For the first time, he experiences reality as he not only sees, but feels a real tree or animal. In time, he feels secure in the real world and has no desire to return to what he recognizes as the fake realities of the shadows in the cave. But what of his friends, the other prisoners in the cave?

Because of his new knowledge of reality, he feels compelled to liberate the others in the cave. Although Socrates does not detail any ethical deliberations, one may assume that our liberated man, in recognizing his years of confinement, holds some degree of animosity for his captors. Motivated in part by contempt and, in part, by a need to free his comrades, the liberated man rushes back into the cave. But after a period in the sunlight, he cannot see in the cave. He is totally helpless and unable to compete with the other prisoners as they pursue highly regarded activities such as shadow-telling, devoting a lifetime of study to a specific shadow, teaching others the ways of the shadows, etc. As he boldly attempts to tell the prisoners that their world is only illusion, they condemn him for his insults. If his world

of reality is so great, why is he unable to compete in their accepted games? Has this reality helped him to better recognize the shadows? Has it provided him with insights on teaching the knowledge of the shadows? Compared to the masters of the shadows, the liberated man is utterly inept. He is laughed at and ridiculed for having made the trip outside. The prisoners attempt to treat him as an example of how seeing the light will cause only confusion and diminish one's ability to recognize the importance of the shadows.

Bruce Lee was not unlike our liberated man that the philosopher Socrates spoke of centuries ago. In a sense, Lee, too, had been a prisoner of predefined and fixed knowledge based primarily on how someone else viewed combat. In one of his first encounters using the fixed knowledge against a rival kung-fu instructor (Wong Jak Man), he had been described as running about the room trying to catch his fleeting nemesis.

When faced with the realities of combat, Lee concluded that a fixed system, or style, could be effectively controlled by fighting outside of the range of the style. As he discovered "liberation" from the "classical mess," he, too, felt compelled to "free his comrades." And in so doing, Bruce Lee, like Socrates' prisoner in the cave, was ridiculed and ostracized. Had Lee invested less time in reading J. Krishnamurti (his philosophical mentor whose book, *Freedom From the Known*, was the source of much inspiration), and more time in reading Plato, perhaps he would have been privy to the plight of his cause. For, like Socrates' "liberated man," Bruce Lee was often chastised and made an example of how a rebel attitude could cause harm by the various masters of the katas (shadows). It was for this reason that there was much speculation, albeit ill-conceived, that Bruce Lee was, in fact, assassinated. When you think about it, it would certainly better serve the purpose of these "shadow" masters to think that one of their own put an end to the first liberated man.

Fortunately, we all have gained much from Lee's efforts. Bruce Lee stands out as the single most important figure in the development of American martial arts. If we as a country are beginning to be recognized as a world power in martial arts circles, it is in part due to the efforts of Bruce Lee that we have achieved such status.

The traditions in the martial arts are both extremely important and extremely confining, at the same time. That which holds the arts together may also serve to limit the effectiveness of the arts. After Lee's death in the summer of 1973, his theories of combat, as well as his attitudes toward tradition, became the subject of numerous articles. During the mid-1970s, large numbers of American martial artists, following what they believed were the concepts of Lee, cast aside their own traditional bonds only to find that, without structure, their systems were virtually useless. Lee had demonstrated the discipline, desire, and knowledge to start his own system. Most of the Bruce Lee clones simply dropped the tradition and anything else they didn't like about their classical systems. In the end, little was left.

By 1975, the full-contact, anti-traditional craze was in full swing. Colored uniforms with stars and stripes epitomized this anti-traditional attitude. This passage from my first book, *The Development of American Karate: History and Skills*, appropriately describes the time.

The traditional and time-honored Oriental patterns of interaction, synonymous with the ceremonial bow, the junior-senior structure, and the karate chop, are being challenged with differing social skills, perhaps more appropriately designed to accommodate the time-conscious American. And, finally, the dojo, or training hall, once pregnant with trappings of Eastern mystique and economically designed to advantageously utilize the hard wood floors and aged window spaces so as to accommodate winter winds as agents of discipline, is now being replaced with the production model athletic clubs replete with sauna, air conditioning, and health food stands.

Following in the footsteps of Bruce Lee, hundreds of American martial artists went from the blind following of tradition to the blind following of a nontraditionalist. With little or no restrictions, countless self-proclaimed masters of this art or that system, stepped forward to claim allegiance with jeet kune do, as if so doing would somehow make their poorly conceived arts of value.

Meanwhile, the real followers of jeet kune do went underground, all the time planning, researching, and practicing. By 1980, the seminar version of jeet kune do concepts had emerged. According to Inosanto, "If you didn't study (personally) with Bruce, it's not jeet kune do." Thus, the next generation of Bruce Lee-styled practitioners practice the method known as jeet kune do concepts.

PRINCIPLES OF JKD

As a researcher and martial arts analyst, I have approached the study of martial arts (at least during the last half of my twenty years of practice) as a body of knowledge to be observed, documented, and categorized. By seeking to identify the principle rather than becoming lost in the technique, one may actualize the commonality in all martial arts. It was while attending a Dan Inosanto seminar in the spring of 1987 that the principles of JKD finally appeared, at least to me.

After demonstrating several techniques from the Indonesian system of pentjak-silat, Inosanto began to address another subject, the concept of five ways of attack. I'll never forget that moment, between subjects, because for a few seconds, the four years of previous JKD seminars suddenly seemed to be one total experience. Oblivious to my surroundings, I began thinking (and this thought was perhaps signalled by the technique of silat, although I can't remember exactly how or why) that if one were to fully comprehend the principle of five angles of attack, then it must also occur to the person that performance of each angle required, on the first level, an understanding of the techniques within your specific art and, on the second level, an understanding of the best techniques of many arts (a multicultural principle). For example, I can perform an attack by combination using any known system. Let's say I use a system of karate that requires keeping my ready hand at my side and my striking hand locked out tight. In fighting another karate practitioner, who "speaks the same language," or identifies with similar skills, the karate punching method will serve me well. Likewise, the karate punch will work against

a lesser opponent who lacks the speed and power to counter it. However, the same karate-style punch, when used in combination against a boxer, a master of hand skills, would be of considerably less value. The boxer could bob and weave and counter my rigid punching method with a more economical use of the motion (this, of course, assumes that both fighters' attributes were constant; only the arts used varied).

The principle of combination attack was not to be blamed; the manner in which I chose to express the principle (karate punching) was the cause of my failure. This is not to say that karate-style punching is wrong. It simply implies that, while one principle (angle of attack) is useful, a natural flow of principles (in the case of boxing and karate, the principles of angles of attack, distance, multicultural arts, and environment all come into play) is often a better choice.

After that brief daydream, I told Dan of my thoughts. He agreed. Having identified one concept, I went back to my notes and reviewed my personal experiences, both in the JKD seminars and in general practice. Here, then, are some of the major principles that I experienced as being the concepts of JKD.

Multicultural Arts

Remember that the principles are brought to life through the performance of technique. If there is a single quality that virtually all modern JKD practitioners demonstrate, it is the understanding of Filipino, Thai, Chinese, Western, and, more recently, Indonesian arts. I have chosen to identify the physical performance trait as a result of an understanding of the principle of multicultural arts. If we consider a single art as a way, then the phrase, "Having no (specific) way as a way," can be more clearly understood in recognition of the principle of multicultural arts.

Since no country has a monopoly on knowledge, it behooves the prudent student of the art to develop expertise in skills to be used in all four fighting ranges, without regard to cultural restraints. A student of JKD principles is not bound

by the skills of one art. The individual may flow from a wing chun trap to a Thai elbow (or any other economical combination) as the principle of multicultural arts is used.

Range

A major component of the conceptual framework that is JKD is the principle of range, or what is often called fighting distance. By evaluating each art in terms of its effectiveness at one or more of the four ranges (including kicking, punching, trapping, and grappling ranges), we tend to free ourselves of the obvious ethnocentrism associated with most styles. When we combine the multicultural principle with an understanding of the principle of range or distance, we can begin to see the pattern of JKD. In physical performance, the student of these two JKD principles is, in fact, not bound by systems or styles, but simply expresses the necessity of the moment. In kicking range, one simply kicks. Specific styles may go to extremes in identifying each kick. How to best place the foot, how to effectively use the proper *kiai*, at what angle and height the hands should be placed, are the prerequisites of style and should be of minimal concern to the JKD practitioner.

Five Ways of Attack

There are five methods of offensively approaching an opponent. All attacks fit into one of the five ways. No doubt, the Bruce Lee student most identified with promoting the strategy of fighting centered around ways or angles of attack is, again, Joe Lewis. (The reader should bear in mind that, while Lewis is not typically identified as a member of the JKD organization or family, he nevertheless exemplifies various JKD principles.) The methods of both Lee and Lewis focus on direct, indirect, combination, immobilization, and rhythm disruption attacks. The principle of angles or ways of attack encompasses all forms of combat.

Individual and Instructor Preference

The often used phrase, “my truth is not your truth,” stems from the principles of individual and instructor preference. While Bruce Lee chose to interpret JKD principles in terms of his cultural art of Chinese wing chun, Dan Inosanto feels more at home with his own cultural art of Filipino kali. Larry Hartsell, on the other hand, is the appointed leader of JKD grappling methods. While each artist shares the principles of JKD, the performance or interpretation depends largely on their individual preferences. If I, for example, feel most comfortable at punching range, then my range of combat will naturally concentrate on those lines.

The problem comes into play when a short, stubby man, for example, is made to perform in kicking range even though his natural strength may well be at punching or grappling range. In my own JKD seminar experience, I found that my own preferences included trapping, grappling, and knife fighting skills. As a result, I tend to show my students those skills that I personally prefer (instructor preference). In seeking the “truth,” the student must understand that instructors almost always promote their personal values. The instructor’s values may be similar to or different from the student’s values. If individual and instructor values differ substantially, one would be best advised to seek another teacher, art, or both.

Environment

To illustrate the principle of environment, Dan Inosanto often uses the simile of the grenade, the knife, and the phone booth. When asked which is the better weapon, the knife or the grenade, one may reply that the grenade is the better one, thinking that it has greater power and range. In a foxhole, of course, the grenade would be preferred. However, if one were forced into combat in a phone booth, would not the knife be the weapon of choice? The environment often dictates the skills to be used.

We have all heard the example of the taekwon do

practitioner attempting to perform his high kicks on slippery ice or in jungle mud. If you have invested all of your time in perfecting a particular skill (kicking is often used as an example), the environment (the phone booth, a tightly packed dance floor, etc.) may well aid in your defeat. Some of the skills used in a boxing ring or the karate tournament floor should, no doubt, be adjusted to more closely facilitate the use of the skills in the street environment.

Absorb What Is Useful

Once the student understands and can incorporate the first five principles of JKD, then the sixth principle, "Absorb what is useful," takes on new meaning. Otherwise, it is simply a nebulous phrase, albeit an enticing one. By investigating multicultural arts, experiencing the ways of attack, appreciating the importance of instructor and individual preference, and recognizing the restraints of the environment and range, one should be more adept in developing a feel for incorporating techniques in a system that has the potential to flow naturally.

For example, it is not difficult to flow from a wing chun lap sao (trap) to a boxing hook. However, it is difficult to use a karateka's high block with a boxer's jab, due to the fact that the combination fails to observe the concept of economy of motion. Again, the matching of techniques to incorporate a sense of flow and economy of motion, and taking into consideration personal preference to, in effect, "absorb what is useful" is best actualized by the student who fully comprehends the principles of multicultural arts, range, and environment.

DEFINING JKD

The term "conceptual framework" is often used to denote a method of observing a phenomenon. The conceptual framework is not unlike a pair of glasses. Let us suppose that our glasses have a green tint. Everything we look at

will have this green tint. Every art or system maintains a conceptual framework. If we observe other arts in terms of the values (conceptual framework) we have learned in the practice of shotokan karate, for example, we of course look for the katas in the art, the kiai, and power of the performance. On the other hand, the student who has developed a conceptual framework based on his impressions of tai chi actually may be inhibited by a power-oriented system (shotokan) and find a sense of compatibility with the softer flowing lines of combat.

Defining JKD requires that we understand the philosophical, the physical, and the social components that characterize the practice. On the philosophical level, JKD is simply Bruce Lee's conceptual framework. Dan Inosanto has told me that he considers JKD to be synonymous with "problem solving." Bruce Lee developed JKD as a conceptual framework to facilitate him in solving the problems of personal combat. The components of the JKD conceptual framework include the six major principles I have outlined as well as several lesser principles that are most concerned with tool development. Economy of motion, attribute development, and flow are representative of these technique-oriented principles.

On the physical level, modern JKD practitioners tend to combine the original Jun Fan arts of wing chun and Jun Fan kickboxing with the Inosanto influenced arts of kali, muay thai, and silat. It would be safe to say that the current crop of JKD practitioners can be identified by their strong preference for kali and other support systems.

Finally, on the social level, JKD is, as Dan put it, "family." It would seem that those identified as being in the JKD family are recognized by others within the family. The annual Great Smoky Mountain JKD/Kali/Silat/Thai camp hosted by Ann and Vic Payne and held in Brasstown, North Carolina, is, for example, intended to be as much a time for JKD family members to get together as it is a time for students to learn about the arts used in JKD.

Realistically, one could employ the JKD conceptual framework (philosophical JKD) independently from the JKD "family arts" (social and physical JKD) classifications. However, the realistic use of the conceptual framework invariably leads one to study the "family arts." In so doing,

one gains both a higher understanding of the principles and the recognition as a member of the family.

FINAL COMMENTS

As a professionally trained researcher with a long-time interest in Bruce Lee's JKD, I had for a number of years been disturbed that JKD lacked a coherent and plausible definition. Ask just about anyone the meaning of JKD and they will invariably repeat one of the typical answers including: JKD is the way of the intercepting fist; JKD is Bruce Lee's personal fighting style; JKD means to absorb what is useful. For some reason, these answers always bothered me. They tell me very little.

I hope that my definition of JKD as a philosophical, physical, and social art is, indeed, a realistic one and will become an acceptable way of defining the term. I can only say that my own JKD experience has affected me most favorably on all three levels. Finally, I would be very pleased if my efforts will help you, the reader, more fully appreciate your own JKD experience.

About the Author

Dr. Jerry Beasley is a college professor whose office at Radford University (Radford, Virginia) has become a virtual martial arts laboratory. Having earned both the master's and doctoral degrees from Virginia Tech (Blacksburg, Virginia), Beasley is in a unique position of being able to combine his professional expertise in scientific research methodologies with his twenty-two-year study and practice of martial arts.

A career martial artist, Beasley first gained attention in 1973 when he decisioned then-ITF World Taekwon Do Champion Ho Kwon Kang of Venezuela in an exhibition bout. A two-time National Taekwon Do Champion (1975-1976) Beasley has owned and operated a number of karate schools. Since 1980 he has directed the 10,000-member American Independent Karate Instructors Association (AIKIA). He was joined in 1982 by World Champion Joe Lewis as AIKIA's codirector.

A fitness buff as well, Beasley has completed several sixty- and one hundred-round kickboxing marathons. He has had more than sixty articles and three books published. Beasley is quick to credit Joe Lewis and Dan Inosanto as the two instructors who have most influenced his martial arts development.

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—Joe Lewis

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